

Director, FBI

May 12, 1954

SAC, Indianapolis (65-2220)

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STEPHEN JOHN BRADEMAS
MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION CONCERNING
(ESPIONAGE -SP)

Re Indianapolis letter to Director dated March 1, 1954.

Enclosed herewith is the
above captioned subject's doctoral thesis entitled

Revolution and Social Revolution:

A Contribution to the History of the

Anarcho-Syndicalist Movement in Spain: 1930-1937

obtained by Special Agent LAURENCE P. KENNAN from him on
May 7, 1954, at South Bend, Indiana.

BRADEMAS stated [redacted] b3 Per CIA
[redacted] Central Intelligence Agency agent, telephoned
him on May 6, 1954, and requested permission to visit his
home and review with him the above mentioned thesis. He
advised he immediately agreed to meet with [redacted]
inasmuch as he surmised that the Central Intelligence
Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation were mutually
interested in his thesis and felt that [redacted] was fully
informed of the FBI's interest in instant thesis prior to
making the above mentioned telephone call.

BRADEMAS advised that it was
under this assumption that he allowed [redacted] to come to
his home at 513 West Marion Street, South Bend, Indiana. b3 Per CIA

ENCL. L
LPK:ced
REGISTERED MAIL

IP 65-2220
Director, FBI

BRADEMAS stated that after he had met [redacted] and saw his CIA credentials, he discussed the contents of instant thesis with [redacted]. He stated [redacted]

b3 Per CIA

[redacted] requested permission to microfilm this thesis and promised to return it to him in thirty days. BRADEMAS advised he consented and at that time queried [redacted] as to whether or not he knew Special Agent LAURENCE P. KEENAN of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who had also requested a copy of instant thesis. BRADEMAS advised that [redacted] stated he did not know Agent KEENAN and was obviously surprised to learn that the Bureau was aware of the existence of instant thesis.

The above captioned subject is a Democratic Party nominee for the Indiana Third District Congressional race. He is the Democratic Party opponent of Republican U. S. Representative SHEPHERD J. CRUMPACHER, U. S. Congressman from Indiana Third District, who is running for a third term in the 1954 fall Congressional elections.

In view of the information set forth above reference BRADEMAS and his present status as the Democratic nominee of the United States House of Representatives, the Bureau is requested to advise the Indianapolis Office of any recommended changes in future contacts with BRADEMAS.

BRADEMAS requested that instant thesis be returned to him at the convenience of the Bureau.

b7E

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Part I

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ENCLOSURE

ABSTRACT

REVOLUTION AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION:
A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE
ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST MOVEMENT IN SPAIN: 1930-1937

by

STEPHEN JOHN BRADEMAS

A Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
to the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies in the
University of Oxford.

July, 1953.

Brasenose College
Oxford.

The ideas and tactics of anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism have been an important influence on the working-class movement of modern Spain. This study discusses the activities, in the years from 1930 to May 1937, of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, ^{the anarcho-syndicalist trade union organization,} or CNT, and those of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica, or FAI, the purely anarchist organization. The study centers on the anarcho-syndicalism of industrial Catalonia.

We are concerned from the outset with the intense struggles within the movement centering on the "collaboration" of anarchists in politics. Anarchists of course are not supposed to vote in elections or participate in parliamentary politics and to do so is considered a betrayal of principles. But during the Civil War the Spanish anarchists clearly collaborated with the state by sending their representatives into the Governments of both Catalonia and the Republic.

Before 1936, however, the collaborationist issue was more complicated than during the Civil War. It was so for two reasons. First, because actions

which some figures within the movement regarded as evidence of "collaborationism" were represented by other members of the organization as correct policy. This disagreement was only natural in view of the possibility of different interpretations about tactics. We have examined "collaborationism" in relation to several issues, including: conspiracy with political parties against a dictatorship, a common front operation with socialist trade unions, allowing state mediation in labor disputes and the advisability of abstention campaigns during elections.

Secondly, the issue of collaborationism was often merely a guise for another and more relevant debate on who was to control the CNT. This argument was usually expressed by a conflict between those whose emphasis was on the exertion of leadership through a network of small activist groups of like-minded persons, and those who put the center of gravity of the movement in the rearing of large trade union organizations, inspired by libertarian ideas. The difference in stress corresponds to that difference in attitude which would mark off a convinced anarchist from a thorough-going syndicalist. The co-existence of both these emphases

within Spanish anarcho-syndicalism has given the movement its peculiar strength. But the division between anarchists and syndicalists over what was and was not cooperation with the enemy and over the best way to organize the movement was also, in the years under consideration here, the source of a split within the CNT. We examine how the question of collaborationism was used in this struggle.

The early part of the study is a discussion of the cooperation of the anarcho-syndicalists with political groups seeking to overthrow the monarchy in the interval between the departure of Primo de Rivera and the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic. It takes note of the dispute on the internal organization of the CNT which began even before the fall of Primo and extended well into the Republican period. The rise of an organized anarchist minority, the FAI, to a commanding position within the CNT was accompanied by a bitter struggle which resulted in a split and the formation of an opposition organization, the leaders of which were called the treintistas. The activities of this opposition movement are considered with some care.

In addition to the disputes within the CNT between 1930 and 1937, we shall examine the more or less constant warfare which the anarcho-syndicalists carried out against their employers and the governments of the Republic, and we shall discuss their rivalry with other working-class organizations. The history of the CNT and FAI from 1931 to 1936 is largely one of strikes and insurrections, of campaigns against voting, and the continuing internal feud. We show how the CNT was doing battle on all fronts: against the patronal, the state, the socialists and against dissident elements within the organization itself.

Those months of the Spanish Civil War which are treated here are, on the other hand, less a period of attack by the CNT and FAI than one of construction. The anarcho-syndicalists attempted to engineer into existence their own conception of society. This was a period of social and economic revolution as well as of war. It was also a period when the anarcho-syndicalists participated in governments. The last section of this study analyzes the attempts of the CNT and FAI to make war and revolution simultaneously and it discusses the circumstances which produced, for the first time in

history, anarchist cabinet ministers. We close the study with a description of the counter-revolution with which forces on the Loyalist side successfully checked the revolution of the CNT and FAI, and conclude with an account of the Barcelona May Days of 1937.

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PREFACE

The student of modern Spanish social history begins with a marked advantage: there is little likelihood that anyone has preceded him. There is a reason why this should be so and it points to the correlative disadvantage: the difficulty of unearthing the sources. The literature of modern Spanish history is not abundant and the studies of Spanish revolutionary movements, of the anarchist movement in particular, are scarcer still. The student must therefore rely very extensively on newspapers and magazines, on minutes of anarcho-syndicalist conferences and on conversations and communications with living anarchists. This means a great deal of field work.

Fortunately, the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam possesses the richest collection of material on Spanish anarcho-syndicalism in the world. The Institute has most of the periodical literature to be found at the Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad in Barcelona and a large number of pamphlets and conference reports as well. Certainly the chief center of documentation for this study was Amsterdam.

Much of my material, however, came not from any library, but from living anarchists in France and

England. Many of these anarchists in exile possessed reports and documents which I had been unable to find elsewhere. The courtesy and kindness with which they unfailingly received me, in their headquarters and their homes, and the willingness with which they loaned or gave me valuable material has been extraordinary. I have met the same consideration in correspondence with anarchists I have not been able to visit. Indeed, the opportunity to meet and talk with so many Spanish anarcho-syndicalists in Toulouse, Paris, Bordeaux and London I have found one of the most rewarding experiences in making this study.

There is, then, a sizeable number of persons whose assistance I must acknowledge. I must add that they are not all anarchists. I have to thank my friend Mrs. A. Adama van Scheltema-Kleefstra, Librarian of the International Institute, for her kindness on many occasions. Perhaps my greatest debt is to Mrs. Anne Diaz, of the Institute, and her daughter, Miss Elizabeth Diaz. The hospitality of the Diaz' home in Holland for several months made it possible to finish this thesis.

Mr. Arthur M. Lehning, formerly of the International Institute, read most of my manuscript and made available

to me documents otherwise unobtainable. My supervisor, Mr. A.R.M. Carr, of New College, has given me many helpful criticisms. For the gift or loan of material I must thank Mr. Gerald Brennan, Dr. and Mrs. David T. Cattell, Mr. E. Lee Martin, Señores Jordi Arquer and Eduardo Comín Colomer.

My heaviest debts among anarcho-syndicalists for their gifts and loans, conversations and letters, are to Señora Federica Montseny, Señores José Peirats, Miguel Jiménez, Manuel Salgado, Gaston Leval, A. Ildefonso González, Juan López, Juan García Oliver, Juan P. Fabregas, Ramon Liarte, and Juan Manuel and Señora Lola Molina. Messrs. Paul Partos, Vernon Richards and Colin Ward have loaned me valuable material.

I have also to thank Señores Felipe Aláiz, Ramón Alvarez, L.L. Ceballos, Francisco Crespo, José Juan Domenech, Germinal Esgleas, Jose García Pradas, Enrique Mondéjar, José Peiró, Eleuterio Quintanilla, A. Roa, Helios Sánchez, and M. Aristides Lapeyre.

Mr. John Walsh kindly assisted with proof-reading, and Miss Diaz and Mr. Robin Farquharson with translations of the Dutch sources.

Stephen John Brademas.

INTRODUCTION.

At 10:30 o'clock on the evening of November 4, 1936, the socialist Prime Minister of Spain, Francisco Largo Caballero, announced the entry into his Government of four representatives of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo. "If more than once in the past, learned optimists had imputed to Spain the introduction of original elements into the political history of the world, at any rate she now set an incontrovertible precedent in having Anarchist Ministers."¹

It is an ironic fact that two of these anarchist ministers had spent a great deal of energy during the preceding years of the Spanish Republic attacking the other two for "collaborating" in politics.

One cannot understand the social and political history of modern Spain without paying considerable attention to the existence there of a strong working-class movement based on the ideas and tactics of anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism. Nor in turn can one appreciate the development of this powerful and uniquely Spanish movement unless one grasps that much of its internal history has been played against a background of intense struggles centering around what was customarily described as "collaborationism".

1. A. Ramos Oliveira, Politics, Economics and Men of Modern Spain: 1808-1946 (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946), p. 596.

As everyone knows anarchists are not supposed to vote in elections or participate in parliamentary politics. That is a large part, although assuredly not the only part, of what it means to be an anarchist or an anarcho-syndicalist. But in 1936 the members of the largest and most important anarcho-syndicalist organization in the world, the National Confederation of Labor of Spain, or CNT, did both. If there is any meaning at all in words the CNT certainly did "collaborate" with the State. It is a nice question whether the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists ought to have done so but that should be the only point on which there can be dispute.

When we turn to the history of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain before 1936, however, we find that the question of the collaboration of the CNT in politics is a much more perplexing affair. It is perplexing for two reasons. First, because actions which some figures within the movement regarded as evidence of "collaborationism", which in anarchist language after all is an accusation of betrayal of principles, were viewed as quite legitimate and in some instances even praiseworthy policy by other members of the organization. Perhaps the fight was about conspiring with political parties against a dictator. Perhaps it concerned a common front operation with socialist trade unions, or allowing state mediation in labor disputes. It might even have been a clash about voting in elections. No matter which of these cases it was, charges of "treason" were sure

to explode.

Secondly, the issue of collaborationism was often merely a guise for another and more relevant debate on who was to control the CNT. This argument was usually expressed by a conflict between those whose emphasis was on the exertion of leadership through a network of small activist groups of like-minded persons, and those who put the center of gravity of the movement in the rearing of large trade union organizations, inspired to be sure by libertarian ideas. The difference in stress obviously corresponds to that difference in attitude which would mark off a convinced anarchist from a thorough-going syndicalist. It is the peculiar characteristic of the working-class movement of Spain that both these emphases were able to co-exist and, still more to the point, to intermingle and reinforce each other.

The justification for giving so much space in an introduction to a study of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism to the theme of collaborationism is simply this: one cannot read the history of the CNT and the movements in Spain from which it derived without being struck by the continual recurrence of this controversy about collaborationism. The fact that there was constant dispute about just what was and what was not cooperation with the enemy and that allegations of such deviationism were at times only facades for a battle over the most effective way to organize the movement does not

invalidate the point. "Collaborationism!" became the call to battle in many of the most significant struggles within the movement.

For this reason the collaboration issue can do equal service as a convenient hook on which to hang a brief sketch of some of the most important developments in the Spanish anarchist movement preceding the period with which this particular study is concerned: the years between the fall of Primo de Rivera through the first nine months of the Spanish Civil War. The earlier periods of Spanish anarchism have been treated in great detail in two valuable books: El Proletariado Militante by Anselmo Lorenzo and Historia de las Agitaciones Campesinas Andaluzas by Juan Díaz del Moral.¹ Both of these works discuss the activities of the International in Spain and the second contains a particularly admirable analysis of the rural anarchism of southern Spain. Mr. Gerald Brenan, in his book The Spanish Labyrinth² gives an excellent summary of the findings of these two pioneer studies.

Our account of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism will be focused on the years from 1930 to 1937. The study will not pretend to deal with the important agrarian problem in Spain

1. Anselmo Lorenzo, El Proletariado Militante, Barcelona, Antonio López. Vol. I, 1901; vol. II, 1923. Both volumes were republished after the Civil War in a single volume by Ediciones Vértice, Mexico City, n.d.

Juan Díaz del Moral, Historia de las Agitaciones Campesinas--Córdoba: Antecedentes Para Una Reforma Agraria, Madrid, Revista de Derecho Privado, 1929.

2. Gerald Brenan, The Spanish Labyrinth, Cambridge, England, University Press, 1950; 1st ed., 1943.

but will be confined, with some exceptions, to another vital aspect of the Spanish labor movement: the anarcho-syndicalism of industrial Catalonia.

The early part of the study is a discussion of the co-operation of the anarcho-syndicalists with political groups seeking to overthrow the monarchy in the interval between the departure of Primo de Rivera and the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic. It takes note of the dispute on the internal organization of the CNT which began even before the fall of Primo and extended well into the Republican period. The rise of an organized anarchist minority to a commanding position within the CNT was accompanied by a bitter struggle which resulted in a split and the formation of an opposition organization. The activities of this opposition movement are considered with some care. It is perhaps unnecessary to point out by this time that all these developments were marked by many cries and counter-cries centering on the issue of collaborationism.

We shall examine as well the more or less constant warfare which the anarcho-syndicalists carried out against their employers and the governments of the Republic, and we shall discuss their rivalry with other working-class organizations. The strikes, the insurrections, the often violent battles which the anarchists undertook justify our general characterization of CNT policy during these years as one of "revolution". As used in this sense the term "revolution" connotes attack

on the established powers, attack in the negative sense of intent to destroy. Another equally useful way to describe anarchist activities during the Republic is to term them "pre-revolutionary": ingredients in a potentially revolutionary situation which gathered momentum until they exploded in the upheaval of 1936. The terminology does not matter. What is important to remember is that the CNT was doing battle on all fronts: against the patronal, the state, the socialists and against dissident elements within the organization itself.

Those months of the Spanish Civil War which are treated here are, on the other hand, described as a period of "social revolution": the positive constructive thrust of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain. In time it was a very short period, only an interlude, but one of enormous interest. It was checked by the military defeats of the Republican side and, more important for the immediate purposes of this study, by a counter-revolution led by forces (some imported to be sure) within the Republican camp.

In the midst of this period of social revolution and counter-revolution came the participation, for the first time in history, of anarchists in a Government, and a return to the problem which, at last clearly defined, still plagues the movement: collaborationism.¹

1. For a recent and vigorous presentation of the argument that the participation of the CNT in the Governments of the Republic and the Generalitat of Catalonia was the principal cause of the defeat of the social revolution of 1936, see a series of 23 articles by V.R. (Vernon Richards), "Lessons of the Spanish Revolution", Freedom (a London anarchist weekly), XIII, Nos. 29-51 (July 19-December 20. 1952).

Indeed, since 1945 the terms of the debate have been recast in such fashion as to divide even the ranks of Spanish anarchists in exile. Now the point at issue is to collaborate or not to collaborate with political parties for the purpose of ousting General Franco.

Seventy-five years before the Defender of Western Christendom saved Spain from a Bolshevik revolution, there came a man to Spain who has brought that country a great deal more revolution than the Communist Party there ever thought of producing. He was an Italian named Giuseppe Fanelli and he was responsible for introducing the anarchist ideas of Michael Bakunin into Spain. In 1870 nearly one hundred converts to the new faith gathered in Barcelona to set up the Spanish Regional Federation of the International Working Men's Association (founded in 1864). Said one observer:

Hostile opinions were declared only on the question of the attitude which the International should take towards politics. There were real battles fought between the partisans of abstention and those who wanted the International not to abandon the field of politics, which at that time meant to form in the ranks of the republican party....¹

"If there was a political minority at the Congress of 1870", said another early writer, "it was a bourgeois political minority which defended the solutions of the federal

1. Francisco Mora, Historia del Socialismo Obrero Español (Madrid: I. Calleja, 1902), pp. 72-73.

party."¹ The Spaniards approved Bakunin's condemnation of participation in the warfare of politics, which is to say they sided with Bakunin against the followers of Karl Marx, who supported such participation.²

A few years later, by adopting the resolutions of the Congress of Saint Imier, the Spaniards reasserted their confidence in the anarchist interpretation of the workers' struggle. It was at this Congress that the Bakuninist International was founded after Bakunin's expulsion from the International by the Marxists at the Hague Congress of September 1872. The Spanish anarchists took their action at a Congress in Cordova several weeks after Saint Imier. It was the Cordova

1. "Del Nacimiento de las Ideas Anárquico-Colectivistas en España: IV", Revista Social (Madrid), IV, No. 136 (January 10, 1884), 4.

2. The Congress of 1870 declared that:

"Whereas:

When the aspirations of peoples toward their well-being have been founded on the conservation of the State, these aspirations have not only been fulfilled, but the power of the State has caused their death.

Authority and privilege are the firmest columns on which this unjust society is based, the rebuilding of which, on a foundation of equality and liberty, is rightfully entrusted to us....

All participation of the working class in the governmental politics of the middle class could produce no other results than the consolidation of the existing order of things which would necessarily paralyze the revolutionary socialist action of the proletariat.

The Congress recommends to all the sections of the International Working Men's Association that they renounce all corporate action which seeks to bring about social transformation by means of national political reforms, and invites them to direct all their activity to the setting up of craft organizations (cuorpos de oficio) on a federal basis as the only means of assuring the success of the social revolution.

This federation is the genuine representative of labor and it should prove its value outside political governments.

Lorenzo, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 197-198.

Congress which determined the decentralized structure of sovereign and autonomous local and trade sections which has characterized the Spanish anarchist movement. The ratification of the Saint Imier resolution by the Cordova Congress is of significance because, as Mr. Brennan says, "the... attitude of refusal to cooperate with any political party... must be considered the fundamental doctrine of Spanish anarchism."¹

The doctrine got a quick try-out in the Cantonalist insurrections of 1873, when the Bakuninists were tempted to cooperate with the bourgeois Federals in the fight. Some of them did, but most of them did not. For the next several years the Spanish Regional Federation of the International was suppressed by the government. A year after it emerged from its underground existence, a Congress was held at Seville (1882), where the Catalans pushed for confining all syndical activity within legal limits, a reformism opposed by the Andalusians. The next years of the movement were characterized less by arguments about whether to use violent strikes and sabotage as by a dispute on internal organization which caused the break-up of the Regional Federation in 1888.

The last decade of the century was one in which the anarchists really were engaged in the bomb-throwing which is popularly thought to exhaust their range of activities. The

1. Op. cit., p. 153.

new century opened with the introduction into Spain of the movement known as "revolutionary syndicalism", with its weapon of the violent general strike and its vision of a future society reorganized on syndical foundations, without any state. The impact of this French importation on the libertarian groups and federations in Spain produced, at a Congress in Seville in 1910, the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo. The tools of revolutionary syndicalism in Spain, the general strike and locally organized trade unions, were regarded as instruments with which to attack the employer and the State until, the enemies crushed, the anarchists had erected the new world of freedom and brotherhood which they summed up as comunismo libertario.

Although the new revolutionary organization held its first congress in 1911, at the Bellas Artes Theater in Madrid, abortive strikes, government repression and differences of opinion within the CNT about whether to favor the Allies or remain neutral in the First World War prevented the CNT from any effective action until 1917. In this year a very large revolutionary strike took place which was smashed by the Army in severe fashion. Because the socialists had played the most prominent role in the strike, and because the CNT under the moderating influence of Salvador Seguí had signed a pact in 1916 with the Unión General de Trabajadores, (UGT), the socialists' trade union organization, Seguí and Angel Pestaña, the other chief CNT figure,

were heavily criticized by the purely anarchist groups, which disapproved of such alliances.

At the Extraordinary National Congress of the Comedia, in Madrid in 1919, the CNT, despite Seguí's advocacy of fusion, refused to vote for union with the UGT. Instead, swayed by the prestige of the Russian Revolution, they voted provisionally to adhere to the Communist International while at the same time maintaining their trust in the principles of Bakunin! This paradoxical position was further complicated by an unauthorized affiliation of the Confederation to the Third International by some pro-Bolshevik CNT members visiting Russia. In 1922 however a Congress in Zaragoza cut all ties with the Moscow International and made it clear that the CNT would join the new Syndicalist International (AIT) which was officially established at the end of the year.

The Zaragoza Congress also passed a resolution which, though it expressly disavowed parliamentary and collaborationist action with political parties, was regarded by some of the anarchist elements as a betrayal of CNT principles because it contained certain ambiguous phrases about the CNT being "wholly and absolutely political".¹ The framers of the resolution were Seguí and Pestaña, José Viadú and Juan Peiró, who were at this time being accused by the anarchists of leaning toward reformism by reason of their eagerness to make

1. Manuel Buenacasa, El Movimiento Obrero Español: 1886-1926 (Barcelona: Imp. Costa, 1928), p. 137.

agreements with the UGT and their willingness to sacrifice the principle of direct action to government intervention in labor disputes. Under the Republic Pestaña and Peiró were the chief targets of attack by the purist anarchists of the Iberian Anarchist Federation and this Zaragoza resolution was often cited as an early instance of their perfidy.

Seguí and the syndicalist group of which he was the leader were thus losing ground in the years which immediately preceded the Dictatorship, a period which has been called "the cavalry of the confederal labor movement."¹ The jailings and shootings of CNT members in the famous era of the pistoleros in Barcelona and the repression occasioned by the wave of unsuccessful CNT strikes combined with the allegations of reformism to cause a sharp drop in Seguí's prestige. He was murdered in 1923 by the pistoleros but the writer has heard one prominent Spanish anarchist state that had Seguí lived on until the Republic he would have been expelled from the CNT.²

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1. José Peirats, La C.N.T. en la Revolución Española, vol. I (Toulouse: Ediciones C.N.T., 1951), p. 17.
 2. This judgment is much too harsh. A more judicious CNT leader has said that Seguí was the most influential figure in the history of the CNT and that neither the anarchist FAI nor the syndicalist treinta, which set up the opposition movement during the Republic, had produced a man of his intellectual stature or political genius. "The death of that great man was a great loss for the C.N.T. and for Spain." Juan López, in a letter to the writer, Brighton, England, May 4, 1953.

The coming of the Dictatorship in September 1923 prevented anybody from expelling anybody. The CNT was forced into hiding and some of the anarchists most given to charges of collaborationism soon began cooperating with republican politicians to overthrow the Primo regime. Our study of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists closes in 1937, with the departure of their representatives from high public office in a republic. Perhaps it is appropriate that our account of them should begin with a description of their conspiratorial activities as an underground organization in a dictatorship.

CHAPTER I.BEFORE THE REPUBLIC.

Two commonplaces of Spanish political history have been the mutual antagonism of Catalonia and Castile and the enmity between the two great branches of the labor movement, the anarcho-syndicalists and the socialists. The coming of the dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera on September 13, 1923, did not mitigate the hostility on either of these fronts. The Dictator harshly repressed Catalan political and cultural liberties on the one hand; he militantly repressed the anarcho-syndicalists on the other.

The National Confederation of Labor had not anticipated the Primo coup. Since the Zaragoza Conference of 1922 the anarcho-syndicalists had stepped up their organizing activities and in the spring and summer of 1923 held regional CNT meetings in preparation for a new national congress. During these same months the CNT, particularly in Barcelona, unloosed several large but unsuccessful strikes. Both organizational and strike activity tapered off after the September seizure of power. The anarcho-syndicalists knew they were in for an era of suppression. From Ascension Day, 1924, on, the trade union centers of the CNT were closed, many CNT leaders arrested and most of the anarcho-syndicalist press forbidden. But even before the Dictatorship had announced these measures, the CNT, in meetings at Granollers

in December 1923 and at Sabadell in the spring of 1924, decided to dissolve their syndical organizations. Rather than carry on publicly, the anarcho-syndicalists preferred to seek refuge in clandestinity.

A. The Confederación Nacional del Trabajo

The willingness of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists to permit the collapse of the formal structure of their trade unions during times of repression has been one of the sources of strength of the CNT. The phenomenon can only be understood if we look at the manner in which the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo was organized. The word "confederation" is significant. The CNT was a confederation composed of regional federations of trade unions. At the core of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement has been an intense emphasis on decentralization and the right of the syndical and regional organizations to nearly complete autonomy. The centralized, disciplined organization of the socialist trade unions was abhorrent to the anarcho-syndicalists.

The basic unit of the CNT was the local syndicate (e.g. building workers), which was divided into sections, according to crafts. Each section (e.g. brick-layers), in an assembly of workers in the same craft from various factories, named a junta de sección, or administrative committee, to handle the funds of the section and speak for its workers in matters concerning only that section.

The next step in the union organization was a junta for the entire syndicate: an administrative committee which was composed of one representative from each section. This junta was named in general assembly of the members of all the sections of the union. Parallel to this structure was another at the factory level:

In each workshop, factory, work project, office, etc., where there were personnel organized in a trade union, there was a Delegate. They were called delegados de taller, and ... they had to be of the same profession because they worked in the same place for which they were Delegates of the Syndicate. The work of these delegates was entirely free, voluntary, but it was invested with the greatest syndical authority. In periods when the Syndicate was closed, or of persecution, this delegate was the one who took charge of maintaining the link between the workers of his workshop or factory and the Junta of his Section and of the Syndicate. Naturally when the Syndicate was acting legally, this delegate was the one responsible for seeing that the workers respected their obligations [paid their dues], and also the one to speak to the employer in any labor dispute. In some Syndicates there was not only the shop Delegate but a Comité de taller who exercised the same functions as the delegate....¹

The trade-union pattern of a particular city or locality was reflected in what was called the Local Federation of Syndicates. Just as the syndicate was a federation of autonomous sections, the Local Federation was a union of autonomous syndicates: a liaison organization which could not direct the syndicates to obey agreements which they had not

1. Juan López, in a letter to Mr. Gerald Brenan, London, July 10, 1943.

voluntarily accepted. The Local Federation had an administrative junta, composed of delegates from each syndicate in the locality, who met weekly. Because it crossed craft lines, the Local Federation dealt more with broad economic and political matters affecting all the workers in the locality rather than the more narrow professional concerns of the syndicates and sections.

The rest of the fabric of the Confederation extended up from the syndicate through the Local Federation to the Comarcas Federation, to the Regional Confederation and the National one, with administrative committees at each level. In normal times a National Congress, which was attended by delegates from each syndicate in Spain, indicated the seat or residence of the National Committee, but not the members. If the CNT was driven underground, a pleno nacional de regionales, or meeting of delegates from each Regional Committee, assumed the functions of the Congress. The Congress or plenum having selected, for example, Barcelona, as the seat of the National Committee, the syndicates belonging to the Local Federation of Barcelona would, in conjunction with the Regional Committee of Catalonia, decide on the members of the CNT National Committee. By thus centering all the committee in one locality, it was possible for its members to continue their daily work at the same time. It was essential that they should be able to do so because only the secretaries of the Regional and National Committees and the editors and

employees of CNT newspapers received salaries.¹

It should be clear from this outline of the organization of the CNT that it was admirably suited for withstanding government suppression. Congresses could cease, trade union meeting halls could close. But clandestine plenos, both regional and national, could function at the top confederal level, and the shop delegates could, by continuing to collect dues and keep up personal contact with the workers, prevent disintegration of the movement at the base.

But the decentralization of the CNT also made it difficult for the organization to achieve genuinely united support on occasions where its lack could only bring disaster. We shall see for example how the enthusiasm of one regional organization for uncoiling a revolution, an enthusiasm not shared by the others, was safeguarded by the holy commandment of autonomy for each regional. To prohibit unilateral action by one eager confederation was to defy a basic law of Spanish anarchism: no orders from on high. Yet to permit such isolated action was often to court catastrophe.

The period of the Dictatorship was one in which the virtues rather than the disadvantages of the flexibility of

1. Aside from general information, this discussion of CNT organization is particularly based on the writer's interviews with José Peirats and Federica Montseny in Toulouse, September 11, 1952; on Germinal Esgleas, Sindicalismo: Organización y funcionamiento de los Sindicatos y Federaciones Obreras, "El Mundo al Día", No. 5, Barcelona, Ediciones "La Revista Blanca", n.d.; and "Consultorio General", Revista Blanca (Barcelona), XI, No. 255 (December 7, 1933), 63.

the CNT were most in evidence. The CNT fought on two fronts. By means of clandestine plenums the anarcho-syndicalists were able to direct their contribution to the conspiracies against the Primo regime. Concurrent with their underground life the CNT was still able to carry on some doctrinal work. It is another characteristic of the anarchist movement in Spain that in times of repression there should be greater emphasis on the inculcation of principles to the most self-conscious and active of the workers in order that, when freer life is permitted, a body of trained militants should be ready to move with speed and sureness to reorganize the latent mass support. During the Dictatorship, then, rationalist schools in Barcelona and the provinces continued to be patronized by the workers.

The second area of doctrinal work was propaganda. Several provincial papers were published throughout the dictatorial period, including !Despertad! of Vigo, Acción Social Obrera of San Feliu de Guixols, El Productor of Blanes, Redención of Alcoy and Horizontes of Elda. Censorship of reviews was less stringent and the famous Revista Blanca was not stopped. From Barcelona also came Vértices Iniciales and a number of books in the form of social novels. In Valencia one wellknown review, at first called Generación Consciente and later Estudios, was started.¹ As they do today,

1. Peirats, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

exiles in France published newspapers and pamphlets.

B. The Unión General de Trabajadores

The organizational structure of the CNT has been described. It is also necessary to say something of the Unión General de Trabajadores in order to understand the situation of the anarcho-syndicalists under the Dictatorship. The UGT was the socialist trade-union organization and, like the parliamentary Socialist Party to which it was intimately tied, had a markedly democratic reformist character. The UGT was created in 1889, two years after the founding of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE).

In 1923 the UGT had a membership of 200,000;¹ by the end of 1930 this figure had climbed to nearly 280,000.² This sizeable increase in strength is explained by the fact that the socialists decided on cooperation with Primo de Rivera, largely in the hope of overtaking the anarcho-syndicalists. Francisco Largo Caballero, the general secretary of the UGT, accepted the post of Councillor of Labor under the Dictator in late 1924. Two years later came the decree of the Law of Corporations (November 26, 1926), under which the workers of the nation were organized by professions and trades (la sindicación profesional) into a system particularly repugnant to the CNT.

1. Ramos Oliveira, op. cit., p. 198.

2. Renée Lamberet, Mouvements Ouvriers et Socialistes: Chronologie et Bibliographie: L'Espagne, 1750-1936 (Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières, 1953), p. 147.

The Law of Corporations established arbitral tribunals called Comités Paritarios to handle labor-management disputes. These committees contained an equal number of representatives of the workers and the employers and one government official as presiding officer. This compulsory collective bargaining, for that is what the law meant, did indeed bring gains to the workers and particularly to the socialists.¹ But the anarcho-syndicalists detested the Comités Paritarios because they ran sharply counter to the principle of direct action and made the CNT strike weapon extremely difficult to utilize effectively. The bitter attacks which the anarcho-syndicalists again and again unleashed against the socialists during the Republic were partially rooted in this experience with their rivals under the Dictatorship.

C. Conspiracy and Collaboration Under the Primo Regime

1. Relations with Francisco Macia

In view of the supremacy of the socialists and the thoroughness of the government suppression of the anarcho-syndicalists, it is customary to say that the CNT was of

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1. It should be said that in spite of the Comités Paritarios legislation and a similar law passed during the Republic, the UGT in Catalonia was of almost no importance until the Civil War. Then, under the control of the Communist Party, the socialist trade union there grew very rapidly. But this expansion was principally due to the influx of a swarm of predominantly bourgeois elements! The great mass of factory workers in Catalonia have always remained with the traditional fold, the CNT.

almost no influence during the years of the Dictatorship.¹ According to the Mochs, for example, the CNT never agitated against the Dictatorship from 1923 to 1930:

Its adversaries severely reproached its inaction: 'it ceased to exist for those seven years', one communist militant told us. A rigorous judgment perhaps, but it did not seem absolutely unjust. In any case, it did not appear that it aspired to play a revolutionary role.²

It is true that the public life of the CNT was of no great influence during the Primo era. In order to preserve even a skeleton organization the CNT turned to the formation of cuadros sindicales, informal groups of militants which sprang up after the dissolution of the CNT unions. But in fact the power of the Dictatorship and internal CNT dissensions were greater deterrents to vigorous activity by the anarcho-syndicalists than their brave refusals to submit to the labor legislation of the regime.

Still it is too much to contend baldly that the CNT

1. Even the Iberian Anarchist Federation (see below, pp. 37 f.) declared that "after the closing of [the CNT] by the dictatorial regime, it can be said that until the year in which the Catalan regional held a national plenum in Madrid, it showed no signs of life." "La F.A.I. Contesta a la Encuesta iniciada por el Semanario '¡Despertad!', '¡Despertad!' (Vigo), No. 108 (June 21, 1930), 2.

I shall, normally, give the titles of newspaper articles but not newspaper volume numbers. Suspensions by the censor or for other reasons, and the Spanish penchant for épocas as well as años make volume numbers of little use.

2. Germaine Picard-Moch and Jules Moch, L'Oeuvre D'Une Révolution: L'Espagne Républicaine (Paris: Editions Rieder, 1933), p. 310.

did not aspire to play a revolutionary role" during these years.¹ "In spite of what has been said later", declared General Emilio Mola,

...the C.N.T. acted actively in secrecy during the Dictatorship, as General Martínez [Anido, the Civil Governor of Barcelona] loyally showed in [a] note on the politico-social situation....²

The Regional Federations continued to send delegates to clandestine conferences attended by members of the National Committee. These plenos, "as the Dictatorship drew to an end collaborated with the political parties in bringing about its downfall."³ This then was the really important activity of the CNT during the Dictatorship: clandestine conspiracy to overthrow it.

It is difficult, in the nature of the case, to discover just when and to what extent the CNT did conspire with politicians during the dictatorial period. But Juan Peiró, one of the leading figures in the CNT at this time, fixed the date earlier than Mr. Brennan has done. Peiró was in a position to know. At the National Congress of the CNT in 1931, he declared:

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1. Already in 1924 there were clashes between some anarchist exiles and the Civil Guard in the outskirts of Vera de Bidasoa which caused deaths of men on both sides and the arrests of nineteen anarchists. A group of Spanish anarchists in Paris had rather ill-advisedly, on the basis of poor information, attempted to cross into Spain at this place and were caught. Five of the arrested were executed in Pamplona and Barcelona.
 2. Emilio Mole Vidal, Memorias de Mi Paso por la Dirección General de Seguridad, (first published 1931-33); El Derrumbamiento de la Monarquía, in Obras Completas (Valladolid: Librería Santarén, 1940), p. 761.
 3. Brennan, op. cit., p. 184.

I have asked for the floor to say, to affirm that from the year 1923 on, not one single National Committee, not one single Regional Committee has ceased being in contact with the political elements, not in order to set up the Republic, but to end the ignominious regime which was suffocating us all.

The first political leader with whom the anarcho-syndicalists established relations was Colonel Francisco Macia. The exiled Macia was the symbol of the free Catalonia so ardently desired by most of the Catalan middle classes at this time, a desire intensified by the anti-Catalan policy of the Dictator. Although a Catalan nationalist, Macia was not a separatist. He wanted Catalonia to remain a part of the Spanish nation but with a substantial measure of autonomy. In April 1931, at the municipal elections which swept in the Second Republic, Macia thundered in as well in Catalonia as head of a coalition of nationalist groups which was called the Esquerra, or Catalan Left party. The party was born only a few days before the elections and was quite astounded at its own victory. There can be no doubt that votes from CNT members were partially responsible for Macia's sweep. Macia was not a socialist, certainly, which from the CNT viewpoint was in his favor. Although his federalism was entirely based on his insistence on Catalan home rule, he was nonetheless an autonomist. The CNT was also autonomist, in a very different fashion. The groups which composed the

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1. Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, Memoria del Congreso Extraordinario celebrado en Madrid los días 11 al 16 de Junio de 1931 (Barcelona: Tip. Cosmos, 1931), pp. 66-67.

Esquerra were in large part left liberals with respect to social questions and thus the brand of reaction was not on them. But a more important cause of a certain sympathy among anarcho-syndicalists for Colonel Maciá was that both they and he had suffered the persecution of the Dictatorship and worked together for its downfall. This was the reason that a leading anarchist writer like Federico Urales could write, in June 1931:

This Spanish Republic, especially the Catalan one, is really something of ours for the time being. We have lived in jail together with some of its men and in exile with others, all of us persecuted by the monarchical dictatorship. Why shouldn't we prefer them to the dictators who persecuted us as if we were wild beasts, who tortured us like inquisitors dealing with heretics, who shot us in the streets?¹

The anarcho-syndicalists commenced their contacts with Maciá, according to Peiró, at a meeting in the French town of Font Romeu in 1923 or at the start of 1924. From this time on, Peiró said, relations were maintained with the politicians.

Our initial encounter with the collaboration question thus concerns the cooperation given by the CNT to political parties in order to topple the existing regime. Because the problem of collaborationism is a central one, we shall note more closely Peiró's discussion of CNT associations with the politicians. Manuel Salgado, who was an active figure in the CNT in Madrid, is blunt enough about the issue:

1. "Consideraciones sobre la situación política española", Revista Blanca, IX, No. 193 (June 1, 1931), 3.

In every way the working-class organization and all the anarchists collaborated in all the plots which were prepared against the Dictatorship, which further demonstrates the inconsistency of the apoliticism of the anarchists, inasmuch as the plots were all organized by the politicians, and I do not think that anyone expected that the implantation of Libertarian Communism would come from them.¹

Peiró told the Madrid Congress that in the middle of 1924 Maciá asked that some CNT delegates meet him in Paris. The purpose of such a meeting would be to begin organizing a revolutionary movement. The Catalan Regional Committee, in agreement with the National Committee, named Peiró and another man to go to Paris for these talks. They went and Maciá told them that he was speaking on behalf of several leftist groups. He asked under what conditions the CNT would support a revolutionary movement, of which the goal would be a federal republic. Maciá was told that the CNT really cared little about the type of regime which followed a revolution, so long as all CNT prisoners were freed and individual and collective liberties guaranteed. These were the only conditions it sought.²

When the representatives of the CNT returned from Paris, they told a regional plenum what had happened, and "almost unanimously it was agreed that the Confederation should prepare to go along with this revolutionary movement (debía disponerse a ir este movimiento revolucionario)".³ In July

1. In a letter to Mr. E. Lee Martin, 1946.

2. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 67.

3. Ibid.

(1924) a national plenum was held and it also unanimously consented to cooperate in the revolutionary venture. Peiró, it must be remembered, was giving these facts in a bitter debate in 1931 on who collaborated with whom, and when, and should they have done so? For this reason, following his sketch of the Paris expedition and its aftermath, Peiró declared that "this means that from the moment when the Plenum made itself responsible for this [agreement to collaborate in fomenting revolution], the responsibility falls on the entire organization...."¹

The CNT, in 1924, asked that the revolution be carried out within six months. When, by the end of this period, no action had been taken, the anarcho-syndicalists realized that Maciá's revolutionary pretensions embraced only Catalonia and not all of Spain. The National Committee in Barcelona called another plenum, which was held in October of this year. The proposition was made for breaking off the agreement with Maciá. Yet the plenum said no. It even urged that if necessary, another period of grace be given for the revolution. Still more, then, insisted Peiró, did the responsibility for collaboration with the politicians fall on the organization as a whole.²

2. Relations With Rafael Sánchez Guerra

In 1928, over the opposition of the National Committee,

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 67.

2. Ibid., pp. 67-68.

a CNT plenum named a number of comités de acción, which maintained close relations with the anti-monarchist politicians and military officers.¹ The attention of the anarcho-syndicalists in this year was turned on another important political figure. In Paris a member of the CNT conferred with Rafael Sánchez Guerra, the royalist leader of the Conservative Party, who had turned his back on King Alfonso and gone into voluntary exile. The CNT spokesman returned to Spain to tell Peiró, secretary of the National Committee at this time, that a revolution was in the offing, with or without anarcho-syndicalist support. Notwithstanding its reluctance to sanction such relations, the Committee felt obliged not to lose contact with Sánchez Guerra and sent a liaison man to Paris. The creation of the comités de acción had thus permitted the CNT to cooperate with Sánchez Guerra while at the same time the National Committee could claim to have abstained from such collaboration. "But because the Committee could not make a pact with the politicians", said Peiró, "we thought we could safeguard our responsibility by calling a national Plenum, and that it would accept the responsibility in any case."² The National Committee wanted clean hands.

On July 29, 1928, this pleno "unanimously... agreed to come to an understanding with the politicians [Sánchez Guerra] and the military men." The plenum also decided that the

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931. p. 67.

2. Ibid., p. 68.

political and military groups should be the ones to make the insurrection, while the CNT would support it, to what extent only circumstances could tell. The politicians on the Barcelona Revolutionary Committee pleaded with the representative of the Catalan Regional Federation on the committee for the anarcho-syndicalists to guarantee six months of social peace in the event of a revolution. The July meeting refused this plea, said Peiró.¹ The significance of this refusal, although Peiró did not state it, was that such a guarantee would have gone far beyond temporary cooperation with the politicians for the sole purpose of destroying the Dictatorship. A promise not to be obstructive to the government after the revolution was over would have involved the CNT in direct alliance with the traditional enemy of anarchism: the state.

When, finally, the coup of January 1929 by Sánchez Guerra at Valencia -- a plot really deserving of the term "abortive" -- was attempted with but eight hours notice to the Comité Nacional in Barcelona, the CNT gave no assistance. The confederal leaders held that their militants would not go into the streets until artillery and armed forces were there first. Such had been the agreement.²

3. The Role of the FAI

Peiró was anxious to make it clear that the National Committee had sought constantly to get approval from plenos

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 71.

2. Ibid., pp. 68-69.

for the maintenance of ties with politicians. He even said, perhaps rather sarcastically, that he would not accuse the members of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (who were most disposed to attack him for working with politicians) of being responsible for leading the CNT into such contacts. But he would contend that persons who spoke in the name of the FAI had supported such collaboration, even if these people were later disowned by the FAI.¹

Francisco Arín, who had been on the National Committee before 1931 and who later signed the anti-FAI treintista declaration,² also pointed to the hypocrisy of the FAI on the collaboration question.³ Arín said that when he was named to sit on the National Committee, he found that links had already been formed with military officers and left politicians.

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 69.

2. See below, pp. 37 ff.

3. The Peninsular Committee of the FAI, in a statement in March, 1930, from Seville, had warned of the "profoundly reformist" deviation of certain CNT militants who worked under the Dictatorship "premeditatedly, intentionally in harmony with the political principle and with the dictatorial legislation". The Committee suggested that with the coming of normal times, the cuadros sindicales should be transformed into nuclei of militants who, "by example and libertarian propaganda" could be "the advanced posts ready to arrest the infiltrations of political and authoritarian tendencies and the interference of political and collaborationist reformist elements." "La F.A.I. Contesta a la Encuesta iniciada por el Semanario !Despertad!", op. cit., p. 2.

In short, the cuadros should become faísta groups!

Do you know who established this very intimate relationship? The representatives of the F.A.I....Moreover, the Regional Committee of the Catalan Confederation also enjoyed such contacts. There are comrades here who not only belong to the F.A.I. but are also on the Regional Committee of Catalonia. They ...established this relationship with the left politicians and the discontented army officers....¹

According to Manuel Buenacasa, who had been secretary of the FAI, "even organized anarchism (la F.A.I. ya)" and anarchist exiles in France agreed in the spring of 1925 "to collaborate with parties who accepted the principle of destroying the monarchical regime by violence."²

Arin reported on behalf of the National Committee to the Congress in 1931. He discussed the work which the Committee had done in rebuilding the regional organizations and the syndicates.³ With respect to the collaboration controversy, Arin was frank:

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 57.

2. Manuel Buenacasa, La C.N.T., Los "Treinta" y la F.A.I. (Barcelona: Talleres Alfa Gráficos, 1933), pp. 109-110. Italics Buenacasa's.

3. This reorganizing work had got under way in earnest in the summer of 1930. It was most intensive of course in Catalonia, where the trade unions set up commissions to do the preparatory work. "Then Assemblies elected their Committees to normalize the life of the Local Federation...." "Resurgimiento de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo", [Despertad], No. 114 (August 2, 1930), 1.

The National Committee, said Arin, held a number of regional conferences to further the task of reorganization. A delegation from the Committee attended almost all of them, and direct National Committee delegates made propaganda tours, especially to Levante, Andalusia, Galicia and Catalonia. Andalusia was the scene of a propaganda campaign directed particularly to the peasants. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 48.

All of us [who sit on] the National Committee had a more or less direct part in the political movements before December [1930, when the military rising at Jaca occurred] and in December itself.¹

D. The Pestaña-Peiró Controversy

In the autumn of 1929, a little over one year before the unsuccessful Jaca revolt, the problem of collaborationism again surged to the surface with the resuscitation of the CNT. But the shouts of deviationism and collaborationism which now filled the air had nothing to do with the dispute on collaborationism which has already been partially described. The earlier disagreement was about cooperating with politicians to make a revolution. The argument now 1928 concerned the acceptance by the CNT of the labor legislation of the Dictatorship. The issue was clearly a very important one because it touched on a fundamental law of anarcho-syndicalist ideology: the denial of the right of the government to intervene in labor disputes. The debate was particularly dramatic because it brought into conflict the two great anarcho-syndicalist leaders, Juan Peiró and Angel Pestaña.

During 1928 and 1929 the two men had carried on a dispute in the columns of !Despertad! and Acción Social Obrera. Pestaña, in a series of articles entitled, "En torno a la

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 48.

unión moral", urged that an Unión de Militantes de la Confederación be formed, an organization of leading members who would study CNT problems and urge solutions. But more important, Pestana recommended that the Confederation organize the workers by professions.¹

Pestana was disturbed by the lack of contact between the confederal working masses and the confederal committees, and by the lag in the number of new militants joining the CNT.² Hence, his first suggestion. His second proposition, that the CNT should organize workers by professions or crafts meant obeying, yielding to the Law of Corporations. Yet argued Pestana, we are losing our influence on the workers by remaining aloof. Many of our comrades in Barcelona have accepted the situation imposed by the regime and have re-organized their syndicates professionally. Just because the rest of us have refused to become legal does not solve our problems. Yes, we have closed the doors of our syndicates.

But do we stop being exploited? Don't we still have to go to the workshop every day and put up with the insolences of people in charge who have no education or manners? Don't we still have our wages lowered, the work schedule changed on us? Aren't we still forced to work overtime hours while getting only ordinary pay? Doesn't the employer still make two of us do the work of three and tell us 'if you don't like it, you can get out'?...³

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1. Pestana's suggestions are summed up in the concluding article of the series, to be found in Accion Social Obrera (San Feliu de Guixols), No. 121 (December 1, 1928), 2.
 2. "Situémonos: III", !Despertad!, No. 59 (July 13, 1929), .
 3. Ibid., VI, !Despertad!, No. 73 (October 19, 1929), 1.

There are several ways, Pestaña insisted, in which the CNT can be rebuilt, even as a legal organization.¹ We can revitalize the cuadros sindicales, set up sindicatos de oficios varios in localities where there are not enough members of a single trade to form a craft union. We can spread our propaganda by joining unions in which we will be in a minority. "And then, when we're ready to work, situémonos."²

Peiró roared back with a blast at Pestaña's "possibilist" syndicalism:

For nearly two years I have been helping to make clear that the C.N.T. should not nor can it adapt itself to the corporative system, to reformism and class-collaboration, and neither Pestana nor anyone else had had the delicacy, obliged by the most elemental duty³ of friendship, of proving that I am in error.³

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1. When, in late 1923, Primo de Rivera assumed power and closed CNT syndicates,
 "...Two tendencies [wrote Joaquín Marín]^u immediately confronted each other in Barcelona and soon throughout Spain. One, anarchist, wanted the dissolution of the Syndicates; the other, syndicalist, defended the possibilities of legal existence...."
L'Anarcho-Syndicalisme en Espagne (Paris: Petite Bibliothèque de l'Internationale Syndicale Rouge, 1924), p. 40.
 2. "Situémonos: VII", !Despertad!, No. 78 (November 23, 1929), 1. The uncited articles in this series may be found in !Despertad!, No. 53 (June 1, 1929 [I]); No. 59 (July 13, 1929 [II]); No. 64 (August 17, 1929 [IV]). I have not found the fifth article.
 3. "Deslinde de Campos: III", Acción Social Obrera, No. 65 (October 5, 1929), 2.

Pestaña does not seem to realize, said Peiró, that present-day legality is different from the legality we have enjoyed in the past.

...At the present time the principle of trade union liberty...is totally proscribed and the rights of the syndicates to act on their own will and in their own interests are submitted to this vast bureaucratic network of the Comités Paritarios....The syndicate has only the right to propose; the right to dispose belongs entirely to the Comité Paritario— and not only the right to dispose but also to impose what the syndicate must inevitably yield to.¹

...In the middle of 1927, at a meeting of militants of the Barcelona textile union -- a meeting which I don't know why I attended -- Pestaña declared that the Comités Paritarios were in accord with the principles of the C.N.T....

The Congresses can modify all the principles of the C.N.T. which they think need modification. What no Congress can do and much less any man, no matter how much 'vision of reality' and 'practical spirit' he may have is to deny the principles which are the essential base, foundation and *raison d'être* of the C.N.T.: anti-parliamentarism and direct action.²

A week later Manuel Buenacasa made clear that his support was for those who would maintain the principles of the CNT as against those who advocated a legal and obedient organization:

...I do not believe in changing the names of things, and therefore I think that better than 'Cuadros Sindicales' what we must have are Syndicates and the respective Federations.

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1. "Deslinde de Campos: III", Acción Social Obrera, No. 65 (October 5, 1929), 2.
 2. Ibid., No. 73 (November 30, 1929), 2. This series of articles may be found in ibid., from No. 64 (September 21, 1929) through No. 67 (October 19, 1929), and the issue of November 30, 1929, cited.

The C.N.T., in good logic, can be built only on its primary organs, which are the Syndicates.¹

Peiró's most telling charge against Pestana was that the name of the CNT was being exploited:

I affirm [he declared] that the ones who advocate la sindicación profesional and urge the acceptance of the Comités Paritarios, are the Committee themselves of the National Confederation of Labor.²

The National Committee demanded that Peiró prove his allegations before a national plenum. The Mataró leader replied that while he could not claim that collectively, and as such, the Committee had supported this policy, they had done so as individuals. "And this, at least, implies a case of complicity."³

"There is only ^{one} of two things for this sort of person to do", said Peiró. "Either in the Confederation without reformism, or with reformism outside it." Admit this deviation "in a final and public way, and I shall definitely keep silent. In the meantime, I am going to tell God about you."⁴

Pestana denied that he was the moving spirit in support of legally constituted syndicates.⁵ But the reaction provoked by Peiró led to the resignation of the National Committee.⁶

1. "Otra opinión más", "Deslinde de Campos", Acción Social Obrera, No. 74 (December 7, 1929), 2.
2. "Deslinde de Campos", ibid., No. 73 (November 30, 1929), 2.
3. "Cosas Veredes", ¡Despertad!, No. 82 (December 21, 1929), 4.
4. "Deslinde de Campos", op. cit.
5. "Por Esta Sola Vez: Deslinde de Campos: Aclaración Necesaria", Acción Social Obrera, No. 76 (December 21, 1929), 2.
6. Pestana returned to the National Committee in 1930 and remained until the spring of 1932.

Pestana, said Peirats, "found no more graceful way of justifying his conduct than publicly proclaiming the death of the C.N.T."¹

E. The Federación Anarquista Ibérica

Peiro's were not the only attacks which Pestana had to sustain. Within a few months both men would be speaking from the same platform and affixing their signatures to a document highly critical of the Federación Anarquista Ibérica. But the FAI had already adopted a strongly anti-Pestana line in 1929.

The Iberian Anarchist Federation was formed at a clandestine congress in Valencia in July, 1927. According to Federica Montseny, certain figures in the CNT were inclining toward reformism at the time, especially Salvador Seguí, Pestana, Peiró "a little", Domingo Torres and the Valencian Regional.² The FAI was therefore organized in order to defend the anti-political tradition and revolutionary mystique inherited from Bakunin:

The Iberian Anarchist Federation...has its antecedents in that Alliance of Social Democracy... which the revolutionary and highly moral genius of Bakunin founded in Geneva.

The F.A.I. is the conscious movement of the best and most sensible of the proletariat and of free men. It contains all the sentiment, all the intelligence and all the idealism of the forgers of Progress....

1. Peirats, op. cit., p. 22.

2. In an interview with the writer, Toulouse, September 10, 1952.

A network of local, comarcal, regional and national groupings forms the fabric of the F.A.I. Its work is in Atheneums, Schools and Centers of Social Studies of a libertarian character. The ideological and artistic Groups which try to educate on a popular level spring from the F.A.I. The propaganda and action groups which carry the Idea and which preach with example and austerity stem from it, as well. The expressions of greatest harmony and vitality of the Spanish people are echoes of its word and its ideal. The idealism and dynamism of the militant proletariat were planted in them by the F.A.I.¹

The FAI was largely composed of young, intense revolutionaries who would brook no compromise with the purist principles of their anarchist inheritance. They came to have enormous influence within the anarcho-syndicalist movement, particularly after the rise of the FAI to a position of ascendancy in the CNT in 1931. These anarchists were nearly always the leading militants, the first in the street when a fight occurred. But their reputation was not only a result of their membership in the FAI. They were also members of the CNT. Buenaventura Durruti, one of the most famous of Spanish anarchists, worked in a textile factory in Barcelona (when he was not in jail) and all Spain knew it. The anarchists were thus not cut off from the trade union movement but extremely active in it and this fact augmented their prestige. Members of the FAI were to be found in the most important posts in the CNT, as secretaries of committees and editors of the confederal press.²

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1. "Por la Revolución!", Tierra y Libertad, (the FAI weekly published in Barcelona) No. 26 (August 15, 1931), 2.
 2. A.M. Lehning, in an interview with the writer, Amsterdam, March 15, 1953.

The organization of the FAI was based not on individual membership but on small likeminded groups, grupos de afinidad, they were called, composed of, generally, three to ten members. Once a group was constituted it sought admission as a group. These groups, moreover, were arranged in a federal pattern, parallel with the structure of the CNT. From a Federación Local de Grupos in a town, the organization moved up to Federaciones Comarcales and Regionales, to the Peninsular Committee. Portugal was a regional federation and Germinal de Sousa, a Portuguese, was the first secretary of the FAI. Catalonia became the center of faísta strength, but there were FAI groups in Zaragoza, Valencia, Gijón and Andalusia as well.¹

Although a draft of the minutes of the 1927 meeting in Valencia was drawn up, it was never published. In fact the first printed document concerning the plenos of the FAI was the report of the Peninsular Plenum of 1933. The following statement respecting the origins of the Iberian Anarchist Federation is therefore of considerable interest. It was drawn up especially for the writer by Miguel Jiménez, who presided at the 1927 conference.

When, on September 13, 1923, the coup d'Etat of General Primo de Rivera took place, the very fact that General Martínez Anido, under whom during a previous period while he was Governor of Barcelona

1. José Peirats, in an interview with the writer, Toulouse, September 11, 1952. See also Ildefonso [González], "Il Movimento Libertario Spagnolo", Volonta (an Italian anarchist monthly published in Naples), VI, No. 7 (June 30, 1952), 405-13.

there had been a bloody repression of militants of syndicalism, men who were killed by the shots of pistoleros protected by the agents of the authority -- this very fact that [Martínez Anido] acted as Minister of the Interior in the military Directorate made it easy to understand what was going to happen to the number one victim.

The first orders therefore were to close the centers of the C.N.T., so that all the federative committees were declared illegal and the syndicates closed, the only exception from this measure being some (very rare) rural syndicate which passed unnoticed or which was considered unimportant, whether it was in fact or not. And together with this almost total shut-down, the police carried out string after string of arrests of those persons who had been conspicuous in giving vigorous support to the CNT and its syndicates, so that the entire 4th gallery and cells in other galleries of the Model Jail of Barcelona were usually occupied by militants. And what happened in Barcelona took place in proportional degree in other cities. At the same time, it was the customary procedure to try to bring the persons arrested to trial by the military, and in cases in which this could not be accomplished, then the person under arrest remained a government prisoner, that is, held in jail at the disposition of the governing authority.

Because of all these arbitrary events, an increasing number of people, when they felt themselves to be in danger, moved to France...and in order to be together, settled in the South.

Throughout the entire year of 1924, it was the normal state of affairs for all the efforts made in Barcelona and other cities to reorganize, clandestinely, groups or cuadros of militants, to fail because of the extreme vigilance and persecution which caused the meetings at the time to be discovered by the police; or for all the members of a committee which had been set up at a meeting on one day to land in jail the following week.

Throughout 1925 and '26 the militants were successful in giving their undertakings some stability or duration; but within an instability and insecurity which at times would give rise to the existence of some organization, which, from night to morning, would be blotted out by the

arrests of its members or their having to flee from impending dangers.

If this was going on in Spain, in France the Spanish militants of the CNT and the specific organization were setting themselves up in groups and naming their comités de relaciones. As a matter of fact, they knew the situation in Spain better than the Spaniards in the interior of Spain knew the situation of the Spaniards organized in France. This was because Spaniards were coming out of Spain and told them of the situation; while it was less often the case that someone would return from France who told the people in the interior how things were going among the exiled Spaniards.

It happened that among the very few workers' centers still not closed, there was one in the town of Blanes, in the province of Gerona, bordering near the province of Barcelona. Members of that syndicate of the CNT reached an agreement with militants of the city of Barcelona to contrive to get started on a combination for the purpose of publishing a newspaper in Barcelona, because in Barcelona a newspaper would more easily acquire a national coverage and could be used with greater success as a means of liaison. The members of the Blanes syndicate, getting together all they could, formed an initial fund. And they asked for authorization to bring out a weekly. The authorization was granted them, because on the one hand the matter was not considered very important, and on the other, because the situation under the dictatorship was less tight, or rather less. Remember that the weekly involved here was later suspended.

But to continue the story of what happened before this government suspension: because there was no printing press in Blanes and because of other arguments, the newspaper, which was "El Productor", was printed in Barcelona and it was in fact a Barcelona paper. Suñé was business manager and Villanueva official editor. The former, a militant of Blanes; the latter, from Barcelona. But in fact the editor was Manuel Buenacasa but he did not pretend to be, owing to his significance and because of the fact that his importance could have made it difficult to secure the authorization which was mentioned. It has been said that the newspaper answered a need for a means of reorganizing. And so, as its publication turned out to be successful, relations were undertaken and meetings

of libertarian elements were started. The result of one of these plenary meetings, held in Barcelona, with representatives from different places, was Comités relacionadores. And in one meeting a Committee or secretariat of relations with a national scope was designated. The secretariat which was formed in Barcelona had Buenacasa as secretary-general. Patricio Navarra, Jose Piedra Vázquez and Jaime Rosquillas Magriña were, with another one whose name I do not recall, members of this secretariat.

As was logical, the double existence of a national secretariat of libertarian groups created an embarrassing atmosphere. At that time the comrades in France were perfectly organized and acting, especially in Toulouse, Marseilles, Béziers, Paris, etc. And besides the committees, they published newspapers, manifestos, pamphlets, etc., as well as taking part in the editions and activities of the French comrades. And at the time Barcelona and other cities were succeeding in extending the groups or committees of federations more widely and on a more permanent basis. In these circumstances the libertarians of the exterior called a plenum or congress in Marseilles. The invitation went out from the secretariat in Marseilles, from L'Estaque-plage [a workers' quarter]. Meetings were held in Barcelona and localities which were organized and at one meeting an envoy was appointed who would speak, not in the name of the secretariat, which, to avoid further prejudices, limited its activity, but in the name of the organized generally. Elsewhere, Buenacasa found himself very busy with the weekly, although comrade Labrador, who did the printing on the press, was helping him. "El Productor" also had as editors J. R. Magriña, J. P. Vázquez, Bou [Bernardo Fou], etc. At the aforementioned congress of groups and federations there were words of explanation, of understandable complaints, but with no harsh language. The delegate of the interior reaffirmed that there had been no wish to dismiss people, from office, nor any bad intentions, that praise for the spirit and labors of the exterior was unanimous and that, if it did not seem like a bad idea to them, a national committee in Spain itself, acting with courage, could be to good advantage, and that it was very important, along with the work from France, to secure the enthusiasm of the militants, of young people and of the people in general.

As a result of all this, a national secretariat of groups was formed in Barcelona of which Vázquez, Vidal Jiménez and Llop, among others, were members. The main tasks were to stimulate reorganization and prepare for the celebration of a large meeting in Spain itself of the militants and groups residing there and in exile.

As you can understand, an undertaking of this sort was not an easy thing to do. Arrests continued to be the order of the day; prisoners in the jails were numerous and undergoing a severe life. If decay and lack of confidence should occur, there would be opportunity to do very little. When enthusiasm continued to grow, it was not so bad, and the goal seemed more feasible. In Catalonia reorganization improved through all the comarcas. For the purpose of making activity easier and as a measure of prevention against persecution and the efforts of the police, it was resolved that the regional committee of groups should leave Barcelona, where the national committee was residing. It established itself in the town of Rubí, with young and ardent members, like comrade V. Marcet and others. In the region of Levante the extension was equally great. And the reorganization of groups and of comités de relaciones was also developed in Madrid, in Seville, Malaga and other Spanish zones and cities.

While all this was going on, the Portuguese libertarians had followed the course of the renaissance of activities with growing interest, and correspondence grew more assiduous. This gave rise to the idea that it would be fine to discuss setting up a federation for the entire peninsula. The initiative was communicated to all the nuclei by way of suggestion, and such was the effect that the answers received demonstrated, not simply agreement, but the letters even talked as if the projected federation was something which had already been realized. This is why different persons, even among those who could not attend the act of Valencia, count themselves as founders of the FAI.

Along with the encouragement being given to the setting up of new groups, suggestions for points to discuss were solicited. As a result of the spirit of them, a questionnaire was made up for the constituting meeting. Valencia was selected because every year some fiestas were held in this city which brought great crowds of strangers and under such conditions the concentration of delegates could pass unnoticed by the police.

So it was that the Conference took place on July 24 and 25, 1927. One must always remember that the situation was one of dictatorship and that such acts were absolutely prohibited. This is the reason that two sessions were never held in the same place. The first session was in the capital, others in the outskirts.

The Conference was opened by [Miguel] Jiménez, secretary general of the Groups of Spain, who began with a moving reminder of the events of Chicago, the martyrs of Montjuich, the caravans bound for Siberia, the repressions in Bulgaria and the calvary of the past and of the present in different parts of the world. Addressing the delegation from Portugal, composed of two delegates, Quental and another whose name I do not remember now, he greeted the Portuguese comrades. He saluted all the representatives who had come and, turning to the delegates from Valencia, gave them to understand that because this was a Conference at which, due to the situation, it was impossible for a very large number of persons from all over the country to concentrate, invitations should at least be given to all those responsible elements, there might be in the city of Valencia, no matter how they thought, so that the contribution of the greatest number of minds might be secured.

Extensive and very important reports and works were read and so were communications of adhesions received from the International Working Men's Association, International Anti-Militarist Bureau, Youth International, Esperantist International, from the comrades of France, Russians, Bulgarians, Argentines, etc., and Spanish elements such as Manuel Buenacasa and others.

Next, the secretary-general declared that all kinds of objections to his report on the activities of the national secretariat of groups were in order. When this was finished, the secretary stated that the national secretariat was going out of existence, that its members were only simple conferees like everyone else, and that a new organ with its new secretariat would be organized there.

Present were the regional secretariats of Catalonia, of Levante, of Andalusia, locals of Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Seville, Elda and others. The Portuguese delegation as well.

Valencian groups such as "Sol y Vida", "Los Forjadores de la Idea", "Paso a la Verdad", etc. Valencian elements such as [Domingo] Torres, who was mayor of Valencia during the events of 1936-39.¹

One of the themes discussed concerned the existence of groups devoted to a special activity or formed by vegetarians, advocates of Esperanto, etc. it being agreed that if they were libertarians and if they were determined, in general, to work actively for liberation and a new social life, they might form with the other groups, within the federation.

Another theme referred to cooperativism, it being decided to give value to all those practices which had a moral and solidary foundation.

On the point concerning the workers' organization, thought was given to encouraging it toward progressive improvement until it won the day. As the syndicates were locked up at that time, it was voted to intensify the nuclei and cuadros sindicales and to form a general union or trabazon for the purpose of coordinating action and assistance for the social prisoners.

On the point about setting up an organization, it was unanimously decided that there should be a Federation for the entire Iberian peninsula and that the secretariat, therefore, should take the name of peninsular. That considering the unnatural frontier, if the secretariat resided in Portugal, one subsecretariat should be in Spain, another in France. If the secretariat resided in Spain, a subsecretariat in Portugal, and so on. On having to proceed to form the secretariat, all the delegates from Spain asked that it be in Portugal, as a proof

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1. More explicitly, the organizations which established and composed the FAI were the Federacion Nacional de Grupos Anarquistas de España, the Unión Anarquista Portuguesa and the Federación de Grupos Anarquistas de Lengua Espanola en Francia. Memoria del Pleno Peninsular de Regionales de la F.A.I. Celebrado en Madrid los Dias 28, 29 y 30 de Octubre, 1933 (Barcelona: El Comité Peninsular, 1933), p. 2.

of respect. The Portuguese, very moved, said they were grateful and declined. Seville was selected as the place of residence for the first peninsular secretariat.

The form of the organization in the FAI is as follows: the groups of one city together form a local federation. The rural groups, linked together, make up a comarcal federation. The local and comarcal federations, assembled, form a regional federation. The regionals form the peninsular one.

...This organization has relied on writers like Felipe Aláiz, Liberto Callejas, Peirats, [Severino] Campos, [Floreal] Ocaña and others, aside from those named in this statement, such as Buenacasa, Vázquez, Magriña, etc....¹

One of the early struggles of the FAI was directed against communist attempts to win control of confederal syndicates in Barcelona. But the tactic of the FAI itself was very like that of a Communist Party. For the FAI sought to control all syndical organizations from without. This is not of course to say that the goal of the FAI and of the CNT were not the same. The greatest wrath of the Iberian Anarchist Federation was saved not for communists, however, but for elements within the CNT whom the FAI considered reformist. In 1929 this meant Angel Pestana.

As early as 1928, the FAI had sought to get official seats on joint CNT-FAI committees. The CNT national plenum of January 15 of this year in Madrid voted to organize national and regional comités de acción composed of CNT and FAI members. There was no objection at this plenum by Pestana

1. Miguel Jiménez, in a letter to the writer, Paris, March, 1953.

or Peiró to the participation of the FAI on these committees. In fact, the National Committee even held that for certain questions, it was "natural and logical that there be a close collaboration of the two organisms on a plane of complete equality."¹ Now Pestaña complained that the FAI was interfering in the activities of the Confederation. The FAI persisted in defending the policy of joint CNT-FAI organization, or la trabazón.

It is true that all members of the FAI also had to be members of the CNT and that they could therefore make as much propaganda against the reformists as they liked within the syndicates. But the FAI insisted on this organic relationship with the CNT as well. Faistas were able to acquire seats on some comités pro presos (which organized amnesty rallies and raised and disbursed funds for the relief of prisoners' families) and comités de acción and often to impose their own will on them, turning them into little more than committees of the FAI.

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1. Letter from Comité Nacional of the CNT to Comité de la Federación de Grupos Anarquistas de Valencia, March 26, 1928, quoted in Alexander Schapiro, Rapport sur l'activité de la Confédération Nationale du Travail d'Espagne, 16 Décembre 1932-26 Février 1933. Typescript, mimeographed, 1933, pp. 28-29. This report was a confidential one prepared by Schapiro for the Syndicalist International. In 1932 he was sent to Barcelona to organize, with Eusebio C. Carbo, the Iberian Secretariat of the AIT. Schapiro arrived to find the CNT involved in an intense fractional dispute. He decided, instead of his original mission, to study the functioning of the CNT and the relations among its different fractions. Before he could get started on this project, the anarchist rising of January 1933 took place. He therefore analyzed both the rising and the internal dispute between the treintistas and the FAI. On both these important events of the anarcho-syndicalist movement during the Republic, Schapiro's searching report is a source of the first importance.

When the comités de acción mixtos were done away with, the FAI objected that the only reason was to decrease FAI influence within the CNT. When attempts were made to keep the faístas off the comités pro presos the howling became fierce and bitter.¹ The personal attacks and insults which accompanied the dispute on the composition of these committees was part of the developing fight which led to the treintista movement.

F. Inteligencia Republicana

Following King Alfonso's dismissal of Primo de Rivera in January, 1930, the King named General Dámaso Berenguer as his successor. That spring, at the Teatro Nuevo in Barcelona, the antagonists of a few months earlier, Peiró and Pestaña, spoke from a common platform. The purpose of the CNT meeting was to elaborate an attitude toward the new "bridge dictatorship".

That Peiró would speak at all before such a gathering was something of a surprise. He had just signed his name to a document called Inteligencia Republicana, a manifesto which appeared in Barcelona in March, 1930. Several other CNT members and a number of republicans also signed, including José Viadiu, Pedro Foix, Luis Companys and Angel Samblancat.²

1. See, for example, Miguel Jiménez, "La Trabazón", Acción Social Obrera, No. 121 (November 1, 1930), 2.

2. The complete text of this manifesto may be found in Peirats, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

The statement declared that in view of the legacy of moral and economic disorder left by the Dictatorship, both the políticos and apolíticos of Catalonia and of all Spain must take the one road back to normality: the re-establishment of legal order, under the aegis of popular sovereignty:

Faced with the urgent need to define positions above parties and organizations [and] putting our role as citizens before everything else...we declare that we are ready to work... to assure a new political order, which, once established upon the supreme condition of justice, will definitely prevent every subversion of powers and will lead the country along the indispensable legal paths of progress for the people.

This new political order, the Federal Republic, can be summed up and defined by the following basic points: 1. Separation of powers. 2. Recognition of the equality of individual and social rights for all citizens. 3. Recognition to federated groups of complete liberty in the use of their language and development of their own culture. 4. Freedom of thought and conscience. Separation of Church and State. 5. Agrarian reform with parceling out of latifundia. 6. Social reforms at the level of the most advanced capitalist States.

"No one should read into this solemn declaration of our conscience on these basic points", said the statement, with obvious balm for the anarcho-syndicalist signatories, "any weakening of our particular ideals."

It is the hard experience of these last years which dictates our duty to us today... sadly convinced of the uselessness of forwarding any maximal program, without the prior incorporation of Spain into the current of free peoples....

Conscious of our historic duty, we therefore make a fervent call to men of good will of Catalonia and of all Spain to bring together

their efforts for the establishment of the Democratic Republic....¹

Peiró wanted to make his position on this declaration as clear as possible. Shortly before the Teatro Nuevo meeting, he published an article which began, "Amigo siempre de la franqueza...", and went on to acknowledge that his signing of Inteligencia Republicana left him in contradiction with his own ideas. He stated that his act was purely personal and that he realized he had but two choices: "...Either I withdraw my signature from support of that manifesto, or I bury myself in ostracism". For the very reasons which caused him to sign it in the first place, he refused to recant.²

I declare, therefore...that...from this moment on, I am dropping out of any and all activities I have had in the organization in the field of ideas and the Press to become one more among the many who silently follow the vanguard which guides our ranks.

...To the conscience of others will fall the task of lifting the [moral] sanction [which I may or may not deserve] when they deem it just and opportune.³

!Despertad! of Vigo, edited at the time by José Villaverde, lost no time in agreeing with Peiró's analysis. If Peiró refuses to withdraw his signature and continues in error, then he should no longer hold representative positions in the CNT,

1. Peirats, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

2. Acción Social Obrera, No. 92 (April 12, 1930), 1.

3. Loc. cit.

said the journal.¹

Peiró's isolation was, however, very short-lived. In May, 1930, he became the first editor of Solidaridad Obrera of Barcelona as a daily newspaper, and held the post for over a year. At the Teatro Nuevo he declared that, "having put his signature in support of the manifesto of the leftists", he had not intended to take part in the meeting. Only to avoid causing great harm to the CNT would he do so. When he asked if he should speak, "the audience answered him with a unanimous sí."²

Peiró discussed the government terrorism against the CNT since 1910 and made particular allusion to the period of the pistoleros. His remarks brought warnings from the government observer and Peiró stopped his speech abruptly. If the Confederation were not to be allowed to defend itself, he would say no more.

Angel Pestaña spoke next and began with the famous phrase "Decíamos ayer". Pestaña was a member of the National Committee at this time. The Committee had been under heavy attack for a manifesto prepared by a plenum of regional delegates on February 16 and 17, 1930, shortly after the fall of Primo de Rivera. With respect to the continuing debate on collaboration, this document, published two months after the plenum, definitely moved toward the reformism of which

1. "Después de una resolución", !Despertad!, No. 100 (April 26, 1930), 1.

2. "Desde Barcelona: El Mitin de Afirmación", ibid., No. 102 [No. 103, sic., is a printer's error] (May 10, 1930), 4.

the CNT signers of the March Inteligencia Republicana were accused. The declaration accepted the need to call a Cortes to revise the Constitution, a process which "must necessarily lead to a new political and legal structure for the Spanish State...within which...we must live...."¹

The manifesto, which had been approved by a number of regional organizations, also demanded the re-establishment of constitutional guarantees, complete freedom for the unions to organize, the eight hour day and amnesty for all political prisoners.

The framers of the "reformist" Zaragoza declaration of 1922² had been forced by "purist" critics to issue a statement modifying their views. In like fashion, nearly eight years later, the CNT National Committee was driven by "anarchist" pressure to append a "clarifying" note to its declared support for the convoking of the Cortes.

This note was in fact a far more accurate indication of CNT policy in the months ahead than the lapse into reformism implied by the language of the manifesto and of the Inteligencia Republicana declaration. Said the qualifying addition: the February support for calling a Constitutional Assembly which the CNT promised to give will be afforded at "a moment of action in the street and with the means which are appropriate to revolutionary syndicalism...." The note

1. B[ernardo] Pou and J[aime] R. Magriña, Un Año de Conspiración (Antes de la República) (Barcelona: Ediciones Rojo y Negro, 1933), p. 28.

2. See above, p. 11 .

stated further that in no way should the manifesto be interpreted to mean that anarcho-syndicalists would vote in elections or give support to political candidates of any sort.¹

G. A Summary

We have now looked at some of the significant developments within the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement during the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. These events are not only interesting in themselves; they point ahead to some of the major problems of the CNT in the years from the fall of Primo through the Second Republic.

The decentralized structure of the CNT had important consequences for the life of the movement, both legal and clandestine, during the Republic. The struggle with the socialists, brought to a head during the Primo era by the contentious Law of Corporations, remained a primary occupation of the CNT. The despised Largo Caballero became a Minister of Labor and introduced the old Comités Paritarios under a new name. But CNT hatred of them, illustrated by the Peiró-Pestaña debate of 1928-29, continued.

The participation of the CNT in conspiracies with politicians during the Dictatorship contributed to the debate on collaborationism which rent the CNT in the early years of the Republic. That such important leaders of the CNT as

1. "Aclaración al Manifiesto de la C.N.T.", Acción Social Obrera, No. 94 (April 26, 1930), 2.

Pestaña and Peiró could approve public statements which clearly implied their willingness to give the new Republic a chance made good propaganda fare for the newly formed Iberian Anarchist Federation. The anarchist elements within the CNT went on the attack. In spite of the fact that many of these anarchists were among the most active conspirators with the political parties throughout both the Primo and Berenguer periods, they alleged in the early thirties that the moderates in the CNT had been tainted by association with politicians like Maciá. By utilizing the charge of "political collaborationism" the FAI was able successfully to tip the leverage of leadership into the hands of the anarchist groups. The former CNT chiefs, who opposed this group emphasis and insisted that the movement concentrate on organizing large numbers of workers into the trade unions, were at last driven from power.

In sum, the history of the anarcho-syndicalists during the Republic becomes much more meaningful against a backdrop of CNT troubles during the Dictatorship. But we have not yet arrived at the Republic. The King is still in Spain and the plots continue.

CHAPTER II

REORGANIZATION AND CONSPIRACY

A. The CNT Reorganizes.

We are now in early 1930, at the beginning of General Berenguer's Dictablanda. The Catalan Regional Confederation commenced openly and legally to reorganize its syndicates.¹ "Finally", said Accion Social Obrera in May, "it has been communicated to us that the Government has legalized the statutes of the National Confederation of Labor."²

1. The National Plenum of February, 1930, had in fact set forth certain rules for the guidance of confederal organizations at a lower level in the task of reviving the CNT:

1) As soon as possible, all syndicates and the confederal committees at all levels from local to national are to be reorganized.

2) Reorganization of the syndicates will follow these lines:

- a. Syndicates which are still legal because they never dissolved should contact others in their area so as to bring them into the existing organization.
- b. Completely disorganized branch or industrial syndicates should name a reorganizing commission to carry out the task of reorganization.
- c. Where cuadros sindicales are already formed, they will be dissolved and transformed into the corresponding syndicate.
- d. Syndicates which, the CNT having been in an opposition minority, accepted the Comités Paritarios, cannot directly join the CNT. But steps should be taken by the minority to work for the abolition of the Comités Paritarios and to bring the syndicate into the Confederation. "La C.N. del T. a los Sindicatos", !Despertad!, No.93 (March 8, 1930), 2.

2. No.96 (May 10, 1930), 1.

A pleno de regionales which had just been held in Blanes (Gerona) on April 17 and 18 decided, against "the tenacious opposition" of the FAI, that the CNT should become a legal organization.¹ The legal framework, although it would have the advantage of bringing reopened syndicates, was to function primarily as a disguise to fool the authorities.² For beneath the surface, the anarcho-syndicalists continued to plot against the Berenguer regime.³

In Catalonia Bernardo Pou was named secretary and Jaime R. Magriña to another post on the new Regional Committee, organized in the summer of 1930. The new Committee began building up autonomous secciones within Catalonia, in order to stimulate the activity of the trade unions in the revolutionary movement. But Berenguer, claim Pou and Magriña,⁴ tried to block these efforts by extending his

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1. The new National Committee was constituted on June 17, 1930, of representatives of the legalized syndicates of Barcelona and members of the reorganizing commissions of this period. "Circular num. 1: Al Comité de la Confederación Regional del Trabajo de Cataluña", Acción Social Obrera, No.107 (July 26, 1930), 2.
 2. Another reason, according to one writer, for the decision of the CNT to reorganize its unions in public was to prevent any inroads on the workers by the supporters of Andrés Nin, a Trotskyist who had been expelled from Russia. Eduardo Comín Colomer, Historia del Anarquismo Español: 1836-1948 (Madrid: Editorial R.A.D.A.R., n.d.), p.310.
 3. Mola, Memorias... Lo Que Yo Supe in Obras Completas, pp.338-39.
 4. Op.cit., pp.46-47.

re-establishment of constitutional guarantees only to the Sindicatos Libres¹ of the Dictatorship and to the socialist U.G.T., as well as by maintaining the system of Comités Paritarios so much despised by the CNT.²

During the spring and summer of 1930 the anarcho-syndicalists attempted to rebuild their Sindicatos de Servicios Públicos Urbanos "without", as the CNT said, "outside interference from a so-called free (libre) syndicalism"³ By organizing these unions, the anarchists would take the first step in establishing a ramo or branch organization for the entire transport industry, a sindicato único. Organization by ramos, or industries, rather than oficios, or crafts, would give the CNT the potential power to paralyze completely all transport in Barcelona. The Madrid Government and the Civil Governor of Barcelona therefore refused to legalize the CNT Sindicato de la Industria del Transporte (to which the dockworkers belonged). In November, 1930, the anarcho-syndicalist workers of Barcelona declared a twenty-four hour general strike, partially a show of solidarity with strikers in Madrid, but also a protest against the denial of

1. See Brenan, op.cit., pp.76-77.

2. Among the demands directed to the Government by the Teatro Nuevo meeting of May, 1930, was the legalization of the CNT sindicatos únicos. For an explanation of the sindicatos únicos, see below, Note 1., p. 98.

3. Mola, Memorias...Lo Que Yo Supe, p.262.

legal status to their union.¹

At this time, in 1930, Comités Paritarios were the only legal organisms for labor-management relations in Barcelona. According to Mola, this drive of the CNT for the sindicato unico, coupled with anarcho-syndicalist pressure to win control of the dockworkers' unions, was a problem throughout the Berenguer period and during the Republic as well.²

Angel Pestaña, in an interview on April 3, 1930, with General Mola, the Director General of Security, put the CNT position on these Comités Paritarios in very blunt fashion.³ They are, said Pestaña, "a monstrosity". They run counter to our syndicalist belief in direct action--rather a change from his attitude just three years earlier. The presidents of the Committees usually favor the employees, while the workers' representatives are paid and soon come to forget the needs and problems of their former comrades and no longer defend them.⁴

1. "Manifiesto [del Comité Nacional] a la opinión pública y en particular a todos los trabajadores", Acción Social Obrera, No.125 (November 29, 1930), 1-2.

2. Mola, Memorias...Lo Que Yo Supe, p.263.

3. Mola's description of Pestaña may be of interest: "He seemed to be a man of between thirty-five and forty years, rather tall, slender, with a sharp nose and a suspicious, inquisitive look, shaved, slow-moving, an easy talker, with a Castilian accent and a slight Catalan inflection; he was neatly dressed, skillfully allowing the fact that he was a worker be just noticed." Mola, ibid., p.282.

4. Mola, Memorias...Lo Que Yo Supe, pp.283-84.

Pestaña also confessed that there were some orthodox (i.e. Third International) communists in the ranks of the CNT; he was himself, as was the CNT as an organization, opposed to any type of dictatorship.¹

Pestaña further told Mola that the rumor about the CNT maintaining relationships with political groups was "false... absurd: one need only know the history of the C.N.T., its standard, its conduct. The Confederation can make no pact either with this group or with that...." In view of the revelation of such contacts brought out at the CNT Congress of 1931 as well as the other clear evidence of such collaboration, Pestaña's remarks--but we must remember to whom he was speaking--can, unless interpreted as tactical, be termed "absurd and false".²

Another objective of the anarcho-syndicalists in their summer drive to regain strength was the re-establishment of an active confederal press. In a pleno of the Catalan Regional on May 17, 1930, Juan Peiro was named editor³ and Pedro Massoni business manager of Solidaridad Obrera as soon

1. Ibid., p.284.

2. Ibid.

3. Only one month, then, after Peiro's renunciation (April 12) of all positions of responsibility in the CNT, he was named (May 17) editor of Solidaridad Obrera. Less than three weeks after this he publicly withdrew (July 5) his signature from the Inteligencia Republicana manifesto. In an open letter published in Acción, a Barcelona CNT weekly, quoted by Pou and Magriña, op.cit., pp.63-66.

as it could again appear.¹ On July 6, 1930, "the first public plenary meeting [after the Primo de Rivera regime] held by the workers' organization of Catalonia" was opened.² The delegates discussed the situation of Solidaridad Obrera

1. Censorship and financial difficulties were the main barriers to the publication of Solidaridad Obrera. A loan from Sra. Rosa Riera, wife of the engineer, Captain Alejandro Sancho Subirats (who some months later acted as liason man between the CNT and the military officers seeking to overthrow the monarchy), and another from the Local Federation of Manresa, which was persuaded to give up its plan to build a Casa del Pueblo, made it possible to announce the imminent appearance of the famous organ of the Catalan Regional Federation.

A distinguished list of "collaborators" included Manuel Buenacasa, Fernando Castillo (Sancho Subirats), Ramon Acín, "Dionysios" (Antonio Garcia Birlán, editor of the present-day exiled "Soli", published in Paris), Isaac Puente, Eleuterio Quintanilla, Juan López, Sebastián Oliva, Valeriano Orobón Fernández, Angel Pestana, Ramón J. Sender, Pedro Vallina, Diego Abad de Santillán, Pierre Besnard, Alexander Borghi, Luis Fabbri, Gaston Leval, Nestor Makhno, Enrique Malatesta, Rudolph Rocker, Alexander Schapiro, August Souchy-- almost a roll call of the leading figures of European anarchism. The editors, other than Peiró, were to be Eusebio C. Carbo, Sebastian Clara, Pedro Foix and Ramón Magre. Pou and Magrina, op.cit., pp.54-59.

2. Ibid., p.68.

and publicly named the editorial panel listed above.¹ The first issue of the new "Soli", as it is called by Spanish anarchists, came out on August 31, 1930.

On October 5, 1930, a second Catalan Regional Conference opened at Sans with nearly the same agenda as the July meeting. The conference decided to direct certain petitions to the Government: a protest against the attacks on workers and a demand that the Civil Governor of Barcelona be fired. "Otherwise," the resolution warned, "the workers will answer these innumerable provocations and attacks with the measures within their reach...." The motion demanded the release of prisoners taken in recent clashes at Badalona and Villanueva y Geltrú as well as of Progreso Alfarache and Manuel Sirvent, the secretary and vice-secretary of the National Committee. And finally,

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1. Other items on the conference agenda were: anarcho-syndicalist policy toward the political situation, measures for the reorganization of CNT forces, policy on modern technical developments ("the cause of unemployment"), immediate economic demands and widening the campaign for amnesty. From the early months of 1930 the clamor for amnesty for social and political prisoners became very marked in the CNT press and, when permission could be obtained, in public gatherings. Yet the only positive result of this first open conference was the impetus given to the appearance of the regional newspaper. Lack of time prevented the discussion of the other issues on the agenda. "La Conferencia Regional", Acción Social Obrera, No.106, (July 19, 1930), 2.

The regional Conference of Syndicates of Catalonia [declared] to the president of the Consejo: That at the first attempt at repression against the militants of the C.N.T., as well as at any other symptom of dictatorship, the workers of Catalonia will reply with an indefinite general strike. 1

Shortly after the Catalan Regional met, the National Committee suggested that a National Conference be held in Madrid from October 17 to 19.

...We representatives of the C.N.T. will meet in Madrid and hold our Conference and we will be there with a new suit on, no soapularies, with "Soli" in our pockets and sporting a new tie. Let the dictators and the Estrada doorkeeper be advised. 2

But the campaign of the CNT to reorganize its forces publicly was checked. The arrests of many anarcho-syndicalists, the conflicts in progress in Catalonia and other regions and the fears of a forthcoming movement of repression induced the National Committee to postpone the meeting. Once more the CNT turned to clandestine plenos.

B. The CNT Conspires

Actually the CNT had been engaging in clandestine activities throughout the summer of 1930. The ascent to legality decided at Blanes in April certainly did not cause the anarcho-syndicalists to divert all their energies to the

1. Pou and Magriña, op.cit., pp.155-56.

2. "La Conferencia Nacional", Acción Social Obrera, No.120 (October 25, 1930), 1.

task of reorganization. The CNT continued to work underground to destroy the monarchy.

Pou and Magriñá are very helpful in shedding light on the extraordinary and complex pattern of these revolutionary groups and committees of the middle of 1930. When the CNT Regional Committee was reorganized in the summer of this year,¹ Magriñá became the new liason man with the politicians. The previous Regional Committee had maintained relations with a political committee and advised their successors to do the same. At the first meeting of conspirators which Magriñá attended, some of the leading figures were Luis Companys for the Rabassaires (the Catalan peasant party), Pedro Comas of the weekly L'Opinió, which later became the organ of the Esquerra, Jaime Aiguadé of the separatist Estat Catalá group, the Catalan nationalist theoretician Rovira y Virgili, and Vidall Rosell of the small Catalan socialist party.²

Later, in mid-June 1930, the CNT received an offer from Captain Alejandro Sancho Subirats to help bring in the revolution. Sancho was something of an engineer and economist as well as an army officer. He opposed any

1. The former, and clandestine, Regional Committee had resided in Badalona. Its archives and belongings were now transferred to Barcelona, where the first meeting of the new Committee were held. Among the other members of the new Committee were Angel Pestana and Juan Manuel Molina, secretary of the clandestine CNT Comité Nacional in 1945 at the time of the post-war split on collaborationism. He was released from the political prison for workers at Buitrago, outside Madrid, in the autumn of 1952 and is now preparing a book on his experiences.

2. Pou and Magriñá, op.cit., pp.39-41.

collaboration with the politicians in making the revolution and put his faith in a spontaneous upsurge of the popular will. Sancho spoke for the technical people, such as engineers, on a new Comité Revolucionario de Cataluña, which contained no politicians. Pou and Magriña represented the Regional Committee of the CNT, while Eduardo Medrano for the army officers, Manuel Hernández for the FAI, and Ricardo Escrig for the students completed this committee. A number of meetings designed to win the support of the professional technicians were held in Sancho's home, attended by such leading anarcho-syndicalists as Pestaña, Peiró, Carbó, Alfarache, Foix, Magre and Arín.¹

Revolutionary subcommittees were next established in Lerida and Gerona. With the aid of Escrig, who worked in the telegraph offices, and of some of his colleagues, the conspirators were able to intercept confidential government messages. They had even been able to discover the secret code:

...In Barcelona [confessed Mola] the president of one Syndicate wanted to prove to me that he could stop and hand to me personally, within forty-eight hours, an envelope sent in my name, which I myself should put in the letter box; I did not want him to make the experiment; but later I verified something extraordinary: a coded telegram which General Despujol, as civil governor, sent to the Minister of the Interior...appeared published--decoded of course, in Solidaridad Obrera....²

1. Pou and Magriña, op.cit., pp.92, 95.

2. Mola, Memorias...Lo Que Yo Supe, p.323.

Secretaries Sirvent and Alfarache of the National Committee had held off naming a delegate to the Catalan Revolutionary Committee until they could report to a national plenum. At first some days passed and the National Committee sent no delegate to the Catalan committee nor did it correspond. Nonetheless the regional group kept the National Committee informed of its activities.

At this point the machinations of these committees became extremely complicated and of course very controversial. The debates at the 1931 Extraordinary Congress partially revolved around the actions during the preceding summer of Hernández, Sirvent and Alfarache. Sirvent, a member of the National Committee, served as well on the Comité Peninsular of the FAI. Hernández, a member of the Catalan Regional Committee, also sat on the national executive of the FAI.

Sirvent and Hernández were the faistas of whom Francisco Arín (who had joined the new, legal Committee named in June, 1930) spoke so scornfully in 1931. They were the ones largely responsible for having spurred cooperation with the politicians. Because the Catalan Regional Committee had actually taken the initiation of such relations on itself, Arín argued in 1930 that the Regional Committee was encroaching on the jurisdiction of the National Committee.

Arín was then sent by the Committee to stop the political contacts of the Regional Committee and allow the National Committee to continue them; it was the responsible organ. Arín was unable to be present at the subsequent

meeting because he was arrested on the way to it. Yet he reported that once more the Catalan Regional, together with the FAI, stepped beyond its proper sphere of activity. Without first consulting the National Committee, members of these two organizations discussed a date for making a national revolution. By the time Arín arrived, the date had been fixed. Present at that meeting, said Arín, were Elizalde representing the FAI, Sirvent and Hernandez.¹

Thus [said Arín at the Congress of 1931]... the National Committee found itself involved in some activities which had nothing to do either with the agreements of the Committee or with those of the confederal organization, ...involved in the movement provoked by the FAI....²

Peiro also said that the time came when he had to call Alfarache and tell him that the National Committee should never allow any other Committee, or the FAI, to speak for the Confederation.³

The meeting to which Arín referred was held in the clinic of a Barcelona doctor. There money was appropriated for sending out agents to establish links with and give advice to other areas of Spain. The organ which was to handle this task, said Pou and Magriña, was the Peninsular Committee of the FAI. When Magriña discovered that this committee was receiving financial support from military officers, he resigned his position on it.

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p.58.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.69.

Dionisio Elizalde was secretary of the Comité Peninsular and, as has been said, both Sirvent and Hernández were members.¹ Progreso Alfarache, secretary of the CNT National Committee at this time, was opposed to such independent action by the FAI, "which", contended Pou and Magriña, "controlled the anarchist movement from Barcelona."² Still, these two faístas and Alfarache travelled off on their missions and ignored Arín's warning of the danger involved for such well-known revolutionaries.³ Both Sirvent and Alfarache were subsequently arrested and jailed.

In August of this chaotic summer of 1930 came the famous Pact of San Sebastian. Republicans, Socialists and Catalans joined hands to plan the coming revolution.

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1. All three of these men were expelled from the FAI in 1931 because of their "deviations toward politics". "Conferencia de la Federación Anarquista Ibérica celebrada en Madrid durante los días 8 y 9 de junio", El Luchador, No.24 (June 19, 1931),4.

This newspaper, a weekly, was first published on January 9, 1931, by Federico Urales (Juan Montseny). Other contributors were Urales' wife, Soledad Gustavo, and daughter Federica Montseny, and her husband Germinal Esgleas. In short, a whole dynasty of anarchists!. Felipe Alaiz was also a regular columnist. This same group published the famous Revista Blanca throughout the Dictatorship and the Republic.

2. Pou and Magriña, op.cit., pp.99-100.
3. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p.60.

When the politicians met at San Sebastian [said Juan Peiró], it was at a time when the Confederation had no agreement with the political elements; not even the F.A.I. had any deal with the political elements....They maintained relations with military elements and nothing more. The Confederation took no part in the pact of San Sebastian. No call was sent to the Confederation or to the U.G.T....¹

It is of interest to note that Peiró's statement is not incompatible with that of General Mola:

At San Sebastian representatives of the C.N.T.... were present, although they took no part in the deliberations....²

...Progreso Alfarache and Rafael Vidiella [were] the delegates of the C.N.T.....³

Francisco Arín described what happened after San Sebastian:

...When the Delegation of the political parties of the Catalan left returned to Barcelona, the National Committee [of the CNT] was invited to attend a consultation. I hope that comrades will pay close attention. The National Committee, interpreting the agreements of a national Plenum, which was held and opened by that same Committee, to deal with precisely this possible movement of a national revolutionary character took the agreement to aid every eminently revolutionary movement, but from our resources, with our means, with completely revolutionary and direct action type methods. We also, heeding the agreements of this Plenum, entreated these so-called revolutionary political elements that if they really wanted to make a revolution, it was imperative, it was essential, to arm the people, to arm the workers; because we gave the complete guarantee, the absolute guarantee, that the revolution with the people armed would be a genuine triumph, but a triumph of the people, not of a certain party....

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1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p.69.
 2. Mola, Memorias...Tempestad, Calma, Intriga y Crisis in Obras Completas, p.572.
 3. Ibid., Lo Que Yo Supe, p.405.

The National Committee [Arin insisted] ...tried, without compromising--get that--without compromising the independence of the national organism; it tried to maintain relations with those political elements in order to be well oriented, well informed of their labors, of their plans, of their aspirations and to be able ourselves to take up our positions....The National Committee, then, was invited by this representative of the left parties of Catalonia, to a conference; the National Committee met in plenum and delegated three comrades from the Committee itself to take part in this interview. He who speaks to you was one of that Commission. We went to the interviewThey asked us what views the C.N.T.had with respect to a possible political movement of a revolutionary character and national scope. The National Committee, after meeting once more, replied that, in keeping with the accords and postulates of the C.N.T., it could in no way enter into any combination of a political order, no matter how radical this combination might be; but that if the political parties of the left were firmly resolved to make a movement of a completely revolutionary character, the C.N.T., eminently revolutionary--the Confederation and the syndicates which belong to it--would be present in the revolutionary movement, but in the street....¹

We were invited [Arin continued] to form part, before the December movement, of the possible provisional Government of the second Republic. It was indicated to the National Committee that it would be most advantageous to the very success of the movement, and of the revolution....The National Committee, the delegation which went to this interview, without discussion flatly refused this proposition which represented an attempt at deviation. We must therefore...frankly confess...that in all the interviews we have had with them, in spite of having repeatedly asked, they have absolutely refused to give arms to the people. And this was our essential and primordial condition. But ...on one thing we all agreed:...that an end had to be put to the regime which represents savagery and banditry....It had to be finished. We understood...that it had to be ended no matter how, but in an eminently popular sense and by direct action. I do not mean 'no matter how' in the

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, pp.49-50.

sense of indirect action, of parliamentary or reformist action, no; they were the only ones to think that. After some time, I was delegated by my comrades on the Committee to go on a propaganda tour in Andalusia, during which the elections were announced; but I have the conviction, the absolute certainty that the comrades of the National Committee did not agree to take part in that reformist question, in the question of elections. That was a movement purely separate from the syndical movement.¹

The politicians, then, as they had agreed to do at San Sebastian,² made their overtures to the anarcho-syndicalists. But earlier still than the conferences reported by Arín, Catalan political leaders had secured cooperation from the CNT. During this period of constant arrests, strikes and republican gatherings, General Despujol, the provincial Civil Governor, expelled Francisco Maciá from Spain just a few hours after Maciá's arrival in Barcelona in late September.

The expulsion of Maciá was seized upon by the Catalan revolutionaries as a pretext for organizing a revolutionary committee. On October 2, Peiro, Companys, the dissident communist Joaquín Maurín, and a long list of others signed a manifesto protesting Despujol's action.³ The protest resulted from a meeting of Catalan left politicians with Peiro, Massoni and Clara. More significant than the manifesto, the talks produced what was called, for obvious reasons of security, a Comité Pro Libertad. During this turbulent time, revolutionary groups found it necessary to veil their groupings with such titles as this. A favorite device used by the anarcho-

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p.50.

2. Melchor Fernández Almagro, Historia del Reinado de Don Alfonso XIII (Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, 1936, 3rd, ed.), p.559.

3. See Pou and Magriña, op.cit., pp.101-05, for the text of this manifesto and its signatories.

syndicalists was their network of comités pro presos.

These committees served not only as the driving force behind the propaganda campaigns and public meetings urging amnesty for social and political prisoners, but also as centers for conspiracy.

On October 7, the anarcho-syndicalists met for the first time in their conference with the Catalan republicans Rafael Sánchez Guerra, who acted as an emissary from the Revolutionary Committee of Madrid. This was the central Committee which had been set up by the San Sebastian group. Sanchez Guerra asked CNT aid in downing the monarchy; the CNT countered with requests for arms. Again the anarcho-syndicalists felt that the republicans were not serious about making the revolution.

Sancho Subirats became as irritated and impatient with the San Sebastian group as did the CNT and the Catalan republicans and separatists. Sancho was liaison man with the military committee which included General Queipo de Llano and Commanders Díaz Sandino and Ramón Franco. Sancho and Franco delivered an ultimatum to the Executive Committee designated at San Sebastian: if the revolution does not begin before October 19, the anarcho-syndicalists will regard themselves as free of all promises. But the Madrid committee felt that preparations were still inadequate and did not yield to the threat. The two officers then decided to set off the insurrection on their own, based of course on CNT support, and aided by army officers and separatists. Sancho had first come to an understanding with Pestaña and with the three

anarchists who were to lead the rising: Mauro Bajatierra, Salvador Quemades and Rafael Vidiella.

The plan for the revolt was to include a three day series of strikes and sabotage. The all-out rising would then be unleashed in Bilbao, Logroño, Zaragoza, Calatayud, Teruel, Sagunto and Valencia. But the government learned of the project early enough to prevent it. A subsequent wave of arrests on October 10 and 11 caught both Sancho and Franco; Pestaña, Sebastian Clara, Francisco Escrig and Manuel Sirvent; Luis Companys and Juan Lluhi Vallesca. Sancho died in Montjuich castle after a few months' imprisonment while Franco escaped from a Madrid military prison in November.¹

On October 15 a general strike among building workers began in Barcelona. It lasted a week and culminated in the arrests of more CNT leaders, including Peiró, Carbo, Pou and Massoni. Following this the Comité Pro Libertad named a sub-committee composed of Maurín, Aiguadé and Magrina, which continued to meet with other conspirators. Toward the end of the month, the anarcho-syndicalists withdrew from the work of these committees. They claimed to be weary of hearing the politicians promise arms, money and a near date for the revolution and never delivering on their promises:

1. Fernández Almagro, op.cit., p.559, and Mola, Memorias...Lo Que Yo Supe, pp.410-414.

...We declared that we would come back when they called us for something serious. We did not see the Catalan politicians until the 17th day of November, on the afternoon of the memorable Monday of the general strike.¹

In late October some delegates from the central Revolutionary Committee in Madrid came to Barcelona, quite openly, to sound out the situation in Catalonia. The anarchists believed that the politicians did not want to make a binding pact with the CNT because to do so would entail allowing arms to the workers. Nor, for its part, did the CNT wish any agreement in writing because its fundamental goals were so much more far-reaching than the more limited if nonetheless radical aims of the politicians.²

Yet the anarcho-syndicalists felt that the politicians, in order to win their support for the revolution³ while still avoiding any substantial commitments to the CNT, would attempt to bargain unofficially, without, that is, any formal understanding. The CNT press warned of the folly of such an approach and declared that the revolution would have to be made with the Confederation or it would not be made.

1. Pou and Magrina, op.cit., p.112.

2. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, pp.69-70.

3. Even at this time, CNT support was a significant and fast-growing plum for the Republican politicians. Said Magrina: "As secretary, which I was, of the Regional Confederation of Labor of Catalonia, I can affirm that it, during the short time that it has been able to evolve publicly after the dictatorship until it was closed by the present government, in a period of reorganization and without any syndicate in the entire province of Tarragona able to act legally, came very near to 500,000 federados and it is only one [although by far the largest one] of the eight regional Confederations which make up the C.N.T...." "Mosaico Amarillo", Accion Social Obrera, No.139 (March 14, 1931), 2.

So much did the anarcho-syndicalists distrust the revolutionary pretensions of the Madrid committee that, at the suggestion of Peiro and Carbo, they sent a delegate to Madrid to determine the attitude there. He reported back that although the promised financial aid could not be expected, the vow of the politicians to "go to the revolution" was convincing.¹

And then [declared Peiro in 1931] they sent two representatives of the Committee of leftists. They sent the one who is today Minister of the Interior Miguel Maura and the present Director General of Security, [Angel] Galarza. And the first thing these men asked was to come to an agreement with him who is speaking and with Massoni. I refused to go because I represented no one; but the urgency of comrade Massoni and the insistence of other comrades decided me to visit these men to see what they wanted....²

Maura and Galarza told Massoni and Peiro what the Madrid politicians hoped to get from the CNT. They asked the anarcho-syndicalists to meet with leaders of the UGT (who at the time were also Socialist Party leaders) to secure an agreement for a longer extension of the general strike which was to precede the revolution. As a guarantee of action, Maura promised that the socialists would throw the thirty thousand railway workers of the Sindicato Nacional Ferroviaria (UGT) into the strike. Maura and Galarza also argued that in Barcelona the movement would best take the form of a peaceful general strike. Peaceful, so as to avoid any chance of failure and loss of arms to the enemy, who would try to brand the rising as

1. Pou and Magriña, op.cit., pp.113-14.

2. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p.70.

a purely separatist affair. Violence in other localities would be quite acceptable.¹

...[But] as Massoni and I represented nobody continued Peiró in 1931 and as there was a National Committee in Barcelona, we arranged that on the following day the National Committee should receive us, and there we explained what had happened and the National Committee and the Regional Committee spoke with these men.² An intelligence was established in principle but the National Committee not considering itself authorized to establish an intelligence, called a national Plenum. The interview between Maura and Galarza and Massoni and myself was on

1. Pou and Magriña, Ibid., pp.115-16.

2. Pou and Magriña, however, contend that Arín, the delegate of the National Committee, was against such a conference and that faista Elizalde and Pou were also. But Magriña was curious and went on his own initiative to meet the politicians. From Galarza he heard an attack on Ramón Sender, then Madrid correspondent of Solidaridad Obrera. Maura said he thought the Catalan political parties had little revolutionary passion and was pessimistic about the general political atmosphere in Barcelona. There would, he promised, be neither pistoleros nor Sindicatos Libres under the Republic.

The minister-to-be also told Magriña he feared the CNT strike movement might get out of control and lead to all sorts of violence. The UGT workers he thought better disciplined. At the end of the half-hour session Maura expressed his hope that the CNT would do all it could for the success of the revolution. Magriña was convinced he had met a pair of reactionaries. Yet...

"What is certain, what is rigorously historical, is that Maura and Galarza came in search of the aid which the Confederation could lend for the fight against the monarchy. Those who today [1933] are excessively haughty were persistent beggars yesterday". Pou and Magriña, op.cit., pp.115-119.

October 29th, and the national Plenum for consulting the organization, was celebrated on November 15;¹ and there, with the sole exception of the Levantine Regional, it agreed to establish an intelligence with the political elements with the object of making a revolutionary movement.²

The regional organizations at this November plenum sought for a solution which would allow the CNT to give support to the coming revolution while presenting an uncontaminated front and making as few commitments as possible. The meeting agreed not to provoke any general or partial strikes which might make the revolutionary work of the republicans easier, and to maintain a similar intransigence toward any petition for aid from the political parties.³ Yet at the same time the plenum voted to permit the National Committee to maintain relations with the Comité Politico Revolucionario to bring down the regime. Bernardo Pou gave the plenum the formula:

...An intelligence is not the same thing as a pact, and if it is true that the National Confederation of Labor cannot accept pacts, it can accept and be in intelligence with the politicians .⁴

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1. General Mola states that this plenum was held on November 3-4 (Memorias...Lo Que Yo Supe, p.432) and this seems more probable than November 15, when a general strike was on in Barcelona. Lamberet, op.cit., p.147, gives the date as November 5.
 2. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p.70.
 3. Mola, Memorias...Lo Que Yo Supe, p.432.
 4. Pou and Magriña, op.cit., pp.161-162.

General Mola's comment on the extraordinary capacity of the CNT for pursuing an ambiguous policy follows:

It must have been disconcerting for persons little versed in these affairs to see the nonsense of legal syndical representatives taking agreements not to cooperate, on the one hand, while on the other, important members were in intelligence with the provincial republican Juntas: it is indicated that the Committees had only an official authority, that the individuals themselves were always the ones who called the tune and who were the real directors of the working masses which belonged to the organization. The agreements of the "plenos" were good for nothing, then, if Pestaña, Carbó or Peiró, in Catalonia; the Palomares brothers, in Valencia; Adamé, in Seville; Fernández Vallejo, in Biscay; Barea, in Madrid, etc. wanted something different.¹

A report on the November 1930 plenum which insisted that "the C.N.T. has no pact of any kind with the politicians" brought an acid attack from Revista Blanca.² The delegates to the pleno, said the report, have once more affirmed the almost unanimous desire of the workers of the CNT

...to take part, in a revolutionary way, in every event which may transform the archaic Regime through which we are suffering into one of positive liberty and full guarantee for us to develop our collective personality.³

No! screamed Revista Blanca. Individual anarchists may help destroy the regime. But:

If the National Confederation of Labor is what it ought to be, a working-class organization, it can take no part, either peaceably or by revolution, in the political disputes of the nation.⁴

1. Mola, ibid., pp.432-33.

2. "Tema Candente: La política y las sociedades obreras", Revista Blanca, VIII, No.181 (December 1,1930), iii.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

If helping to bring down the monarchy was "political", however, the CNT continued to participate in "the political disputes of the nation". Several days after the plenum another wave of strikes swept through the country: in Madrid, Alicante, Granada, Reus and elsewhere. A large strike in Barcelona which began on November 15 lasted for four days. In December came the premature rising of two republican officers at Jaca. It was followed the next day, December 13, by a general strike in Madrid which failed because of the defection of the socialists. On December 15 the members of CNT Regional Committee were arrested at the Llobregat airfield as they attempted to seize planes with which to lead the revolution. In Madrid Ramon Franco, the brother of General Francisco Franco, flew over the Royal Palace showering republican manifestos. The Central Revolutionary Committee, the future Government of the Second Spanish Republic, was convoyed to the Model Prison in the capital.

By February 1931, the Berenguer Government had resigned. It was obvious that the monarchy was on the way out. A clandestine plenum of the CNT held in Valencia on March 19, 1931, agreed, in spite of contrary pressure from the extremists, to legalize the syndicates. Some of the anarchists wanted to open the syndicates forcibly on an agreed date.

They finally gave in before the promise that a revolutionary movement, in which they would cooperate, would be produced very shortly, and before the recommendation of the National Committee that, without any political promise, they vote for the candidates farthest to the left.¹

On April 12th Spain voted for its municipal Councillors; every provincial capital but four voted republican. The King left the country. Said Juan Peiro several years later:

I am not going to deny that, with our subversive work from Solidaridad Obrera and from the tribune, the revolutionary syndicalists did not contribute indirectly to the electoral triumph of April 12th...

The masses of the people, who knew the pain of the goading thrusts of the tyrannical Dictatorship, longed irresistibly to change the political decoration of Spain. Their anxieties were transformed into the desire for a republic and we--and all the anarchists too--powerless to channel that formidable anti-monarchical current along paths which went beyond the Republic, stood to one side and let the people overflow in simple enthusiasm to follow their will. We never told the workers to go to the ballot boxes; but neither did we tell them not to.²

The result, as Horacio Prieto, another CNT leader, described it, was a "votación masiva de los confederados por la Republica."³

The two objectives of the CNT in the months between the exile of Primo and the exile of Alfonso had thus been achieved. First, the anarcho-syndicalists had made very great strides

1. Mola, Memorias...El Derrumbamiento de la Monarquía, p.760.
2. "El Sindicalismo y el problema político de España", El Combate Sindicalista (Valencia), No.1 (September 6, 1935),⁴
3. Horacio M. Prieto, Marxismo y Socialismo Libertario (Paris: Ediciones Madrid, 1947), p.109.

towards reorganizing their forces and were emerging more powerful than ever before. Secondly, they had, through actively conspiring with the republican parties and, in "the hour of truth", even voting for the Republic, played an important share in the overthrow of the Spanish monarchy and the Dictatorship.

CHAPTER III

THE REPUBLIC: THE FIRST THREE MONTHS

A. The CNT Greet the Republic.

On the afternoon of April 14, 1931, in Barcelona, the National Confederation of Labor distributed a handbill signed by the Regional Committee of Catalonia and by the Local Federation of Syndicates: Said the leaflet:

To the people of Barcelona--the Republic has been proclaimed in Spain.¹

The luckless Bourbon who had us by the throat has had to give up power.

The Ayuntamientos, the Deputation, Post and Telegraph Offices, are in the hands of the people. In order to sanction these deeds we must demonstrate in the street.

We are not enthusiastic about a bourgeois Republic, but we shall not consent to a new dictatorship.

The people must be ready against a possible reaction by the armed forces.

If the Republic is to consolidate itself, it will have to rely on the workers' organization; if it does not do so, it will fail.

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1. In the municipal elections in Catalonia the Esquerra, with the support of the lower middle class, the peasants and the proletariat, won a crushing victory over the rightist clerical industrial party, which was called the Lliga Catalana. Twenty-five of the thirty-three Esquerra candidates were elected throughout Catalonia; all fourteen won in Barcelona. Companys went to the City Hall and proclaimed the Catalan Republic and Maciá was named President of the new Catalan Government. Three Ministers from the Provisional Government of the Republic came hastily from Madrid to assure the eager Catalans that their home rule aspirations would be attended to as soon as possible. Maciá was henceforth the "Provisional President of the Government of the Generalitat of Catalonia". Catalonia received her Autonomy Statute from the Cortes of the Republic in September 1932.

As a prior condition, we demand the immediate liberty of all our prisoners.¹

After this, the most important of all, we shall impose other conditions.

The Regional Confederation of Labor in Catalonia declares a general strike and will be guided by events.

For the liberty of the prisoners. For the revolution. Long live the National Confederation of Labor of Spain!²

The general strike called for the fifteenth was cut short. Luis Companys, a newly elected councillor and soon to be Civil Governor of Barcelona, told the anarcho-syndicalists:

If you think you are going to make the social revolution by force, make it; I am not going to be an obstacle. If you understand that in this hour the only possible revolution is a radical political evolution which will give ample room for you to make propaganda for your own society, help me....Spain, you know better than I do, is not ready for a social revolution....I know that your anarchist principles do not allow you to cooperate directly in our political and constructive work, but give us this loan of confidence, allow us to fulfill our historic mission and we shall all of us become worthy of the general good.³

Companys shrewdly announced a national holiday; Angel Pestaña announced a back-to-work order for the sixteenth.⁴

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1. Nearly six hundred social and political prisoners were released on April 14 on the orders of Maciá.
 2. José Gaya Picón, Los Hombres Que Trajeron la República (Número 5): La Jornada Histórica de Barcelona (Madrid: Editorial Castro, 1931), p. 30.
 3. Francisco Madrid, Ocho Meses y Un Día en el Gobierno Civil de Barcelona (Barcelona: Ediciones de la Flecha, 1932), pp. 134-35.
 4. On the night of April 14, Maciá had unsuccessfully tried to persuade Pestaña to take a position in the new Government of the Generalitat.

Companys, a lawyer who had in years past defended Catalan anarchists in court, now sought with all the tact he could muster to draw on that earlier relationship. As Civil Governor, he wanted to prevent anarchist extremism from crippling the government of Catalonia. Syndicalism, Companys declared, had an attitude "of great conscientiousness and responsibility." Its program with respect to the Republic was "to serve it."¹

B. The FAI Attack on Collaborationism.

Such moderation may have been the attitude Companys hoped for and, from Pestaña and Peiró at least, with good reason. But Salvador Seguí had also, before the Dictatorship, urged a similar course upon the CNT and had met very great opposition from the "purists". Seguí's was a policy which emphasized the syndicalist component of the CNT creed rather than the anarchist.²

1. Madrid, op. cit., p. 138.

2. For an interesting account of Seguí's life and ideas, see José Viadiu, Salvador Seguí: "Noy del Sucre", (Valencia: Cuadernos de Cultura, 1930). This booklet has been reprinted as Figuras de la Revolución Española: Salvador Seguí, Noy del Sucre, Cahiers Mensuels de Culture, No. 34 (December 15, 1950), Toulouse, Éditions "Universo".

Now, however, in the summer of 1931, the Iberian Anarchist Federation began to press for a more extremist attitude.¹ Led by Juan García Oliver, Francisco Ascaso Budría and Buenaventura Durruti,² the faistas attacked any move toward direct

1. Here is one description of the FAI. It ignores the facts that the FAI was rooted in anarchist tradition and was no Catalan monopoly but it is interesting as typifying the middle-class conception of the organization. The writer, Francisco Madrid, was the Barcelona correspondent of El Sol. He based his book on the material of a journalist who belonged to the Esquerra.

"What kind of a thing is the F.A.I.? What does this mysterious power mean in the direction of the sindicatos únicos? It is not difficult to explain. Neither is it so mysterious as all that. The anarchists de acción have rich soil in Barcelona. The Catalan worker, who, isolated, has a clear notion of ideas and of historical events--which reveals his magnificent individual worth--as soon as he joins with others in proletarian organizations, loses his control and hands himself over easily to the best and most frantic demagogue. The one who shouts the most, the most intransigent, the fiercest, the one who is most against any collaboration, is according to them, the most revolutionary and the one nearest the truth. In assemblies the person who is most right is the one who speaks most violently against the authorities and against bourgeois society. The one who calls the civil guards 'assassins', the politicians 'thieves' and the bourgeoisie 'sons of a whore', is the genuine revolutionary. The one who cries for burnings, assaults, assassinations and crimes and who, to justify those which may occur, warns at every moment of the danger of ferocious dictatorships, is the one who gets most congratulations and praise." Madrid, op. cit., p. 139.

2. These "three musketeers", as they were known in Spain, were the leading figures in a FAI group called "Los Indomables". The group also included Aurelio Fernández, Gregorio Jover, García Vivanco, Manuel Rivas, Antonio Ortiz, Joaquín Ascaso, Domingo Ascaso and two others. They met weekly to discuss matters raised by the Federación Local de Grupos Anarquistas, to which the group sent one delegate, who could in turn put a problem to the Local Federation on behalf of his grupo. Federica Montseny, in an interview with the writer, Toulouse, September 14, 1952.

collaboration with the politicians of Macià's Catalan Left party. Even a policy of refraining from stirring up unrest and from pressing stringent demands upon the government drew their wrath. For example, the National Committee of the CNT declared:

We have said that the National Confederation of Labor is not against the Republic. It is more conscious of what it represents in the soul of the multitudes; the C.N.T. has been entreated to oppose by all means any uprising which the forces of reaction might attempt. Whether we like it or not, the attitude of the C.N.T. is an attitude which would have to result in the defense of the Republic....¹

Such statements could only lend weight to the FAI contention that veteran CNT leaders were associating much too closely with the Catalan politicians. Schapiro, who was very critical of both the FAI and the moderates, insists that there was good ground for these allegations. In view of the joint conspiracies both within Spain and abroad on the part of anarcho-syndicalists and political and military persons during the Dictatorial ^{at} period, certain friendships of this sort were almost inevitable. Moreover such ties were closest in Catalonia, where the federalist tendency was strongest and where the personality of a man like Macià attracted many

1. "La Confederación Nacional del Trabajo Ante el Momento Actual", Solidaridad Obrera (Barcelona [hereinafter cited as Solidaridad Obrera]), No. 151 (May 14, 1931), 3.

personal sympathies.¹

But if Pestaña and Peiró were willing to suspend pressure on the Generalitat, the faístas suffered no such inhibitions. Already on May Day a large FAI rally drew up a list of thorough-going demands for Maciá and, led by García Oliver, Durruti, Ascaso and Santiago Bilbao, the crowd marched to the Palace of the Generalitat and announced them to the President.² The incident was an early omen of the FAI determination to give the new republic and governors no rest, either in Barcelona or anywhere else in Spain.

C. The CNT, Largo Ceballero and the Barcelona Docks

It also became apparent almost immediately after the advent of the Republic that the historic antagonism between the anarcho-syndicalists and the socialists had in no way died out. When the Provisional Government of the Republic

1. Schapiro, op. cit., pp. 38-40.

Leon Trotsky seconded the FAI analysis in a letter dated May 31, 1931:

"From what I see, the anarcho-syndicalists are carrying out a conciliatory policy with respect to the detestable regime of Colonel Maciá, the Barcelona commissioner of the Madrid imperialists. The chiefs of anarcho-syndicalism have been converted into subordinate employees and genuine agents of the Catalan nationalism of social peace...." "La Revolución Española al Día", Comunismo (Órgano teórico mensual de la Oposición Internacional en España), I, No. 5 (October, 1931), 9.

2. These demands included dissolution of the Civil Guards, seizure of the capital assets of religious orders for investment in public works, the disappearance of monopolies and the sharing of landowners' hunting grounds among the workers. El Luchador, No. 18 (May 8, 1931), 4.

was formed three socialists took portfolios.¹ One of them was the hated enemy of the CNT, Francisco Largo Caballero. Caballero took up the same post he had held under the Dictatorship: the Department of Labor; he not unnaturally began to use it for the same purpose: to drive back the CNT and increase the power of the UGT.

The Minister of Labor (and UGT secretary general) issued a series of emergency decrees dealing with labor matters almost as soon as he took office.² The first of these came on April 22, proclaiming May Day a national holiday. Then on May 7 the

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1. The other two socialists were Fernando de los Ríos (Justice) and Indalecio Prieto (Finance). The rest of the provisional Government consisted of: Niceto Alcalá Zamora, Conservative (President); Alejandro Lerroux, Radical (Foreign Affairs); Manuel Azafia, Left Republican (War); Santiago Casares Quiroga, Galician Autonomist (Navy); Miguel Maure, Conservative (Interior); Marcelino Domingo, Radical Socialist (Education); Alvaro de Albornoz, Radical Socialist, (Public Works); Luis Nicolau d'Oliver, Catalan Autonomist (Commerce); and Diego Martínez Barrio, Radical (Communications). It was, in other words, a coalition of left and right republicans in which the socialists participated.
 2. Fifty-one laws and decrees were published by the Ministry of Labor during the last eight months of 1931 and fifty-seven during the first eight of 1932. They brought, to the rage of the anarcho-syndicalists, an enormous increase in the power of the government in labor questions. "A whole army of Government officials, mostly Socialists, made their appearance to enforce the new laws and saw to it that, whenever possible, they should be used to extend the influence of the U.G.T. at the expense of the C.N.T. This had of course been the intention of those who drew them up...." Brennan, op. cit., p. 259. At the end of 1930 the UGT had 277,011 members in 1,734 syndicates; by the middle of June 1932, it reckoned on 1,041,539 members and 5,107 trade unions. Picard-Moch and Moch, op. cit., p. 280.

old Comités Paritarios (now called Jurados Mixtos), containing workers and employers and presided over by a delegate from the Ministry of Labor, which is to say Largo Caballero, were instituted.¹ These tribunals were to have their power considerably extended in November 1931 by the Law of Mixed Juries, which allowed these boards to oversee the functioning of all labor contracts. But the very fact that the Republic continued, by decree, the arbitral committees of the Dictatorship, and sought to enforce them even before the November law was passed, meant serious trouble between the CNT and the UGT from May on.² Largo Caballero and his labor policies were subjected to unremitting attacks by the CNT:

The brand-new minister of Labor--muy largo y muy poco caballero--this...ex-stucco worker [Caballero had been a plasterer], is following the same paritarian and 'parasitic' maneuvers of the ministers of his type during the Dictatorship and the neo-dictatorship.

Aunós and Ros de Olano successively implanted and consolidated the Comités Paritarios. And now, this Socialist collaborator of these gentlemen; this servile Socialist of the ex-monarchy, is following the labor policy of the Governments of Ferdinand VII....Capriciously and stubbornly, he continues yesterday's error, when the monarchical despotism was useful to the ex-minister of State and secretary of the U.G.T. in imposing his policy of collaborationism, paritarianism and bureaucratism.

1. Lamberet, op. cit., p. 165.

2. Lean Men, a rather uneven novel by Ralph Bates (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1938, 2 vols.; first published 1934) describes the sharpening of the hostility between socialists and anarcho-syndicalists in Barcelona in the first two months of the Republic on account of the compulsory arbitration policy in labor disputes. Vol. II, pp. 69-70.

Decidedly, we refuse the Comités Paritarios. Decidedly, we are more than against that shapeless embryo of the monarchy and the Dictatorship. And if the Republic now makes them its own, we shall continue to oppose and protest against whatever means interference with and adulteration of the direct action tactics which are our reason for existence.¹

The two main scenes and symbols of the conflict between the anarcho-syndicalists and the socialists during the summer of 1931 were the Barcelona docks and the Telephone Building in Madrid.² Under the Dictatorship the CNT dock syndicate in Barcelona dissolved, a UGT one was substituted and of course a Comité Paritario was introduced. With the end of the Dictatorship the CNT sought to reorganize its unions and regain its former power. The UGT Federación de Entidades del Puerto, although outnumbered, naturally resisted. It could lean on the support of Largo Ceballero, who sought to displace the anarcho-syndicalists by enforcing his interventionist labor code. Companies tried to negotiate between the UGT and CNT dockworkers in their struggle for the upper hand at the docks. A delegate from the Ministry of Labor even managed to intervene. The various parties reached an accord in the middle of May on a hiring scheme which favored union members.

1. "El Ministro del Trabajo, de los Comités Paritarios y nuestra continuidad en la oposición y protesta", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 154 (May 17, 1931), 12.

2. Another important instance of the UGT-CNT struggle in the early months of the Republic was the strike of the CNT miners in Asturias. They asked for the derogation of a decree of Primo de Rivera which increased their hours of work. The Government took no action. Said the miners' representative at the National CNT Congress in June: "When we put our claims to the employers they told us that all complaints had to be settled by the Comité Paritario. As we went nothing to do with this Committee on June 1 we went on strike...." He went on to speak of "the fascists of socialism", who "are counting on their 'leader' Largo Ceballero to smash us." Memoria del Congreso

But that was all they could agree on.¹

Even the limited settlement in the harbor dispute lasted less than two weeks. The CNT claimed that the rival union had broken the understanding and on May 28 rallied all the unions of the Barcelona Local Federation to a meeting to frame a policy toward the port conflict. The deeds of Martínez Anido look good compared with those of Largo Caballero! rang one passionate speech. The speaker blasted the UGT port union and warned that the CNT not only would refuse to go on strike with it but would take the necessary steps to destroy the organization. The meeting called for Largo Caballero's resignation and resolved that workers who were members of the CNT would not labor alongside persons who had no CNT carnet. Of the 4,000 dockworkers, 3,700 belonged to the confederal union.

This ultimatum obviously threatened a strike and consequent paralysis of the port, with all that such a stoppage would mean to a great city like Barcelona. Maciá met with the union leaders and arranged another truce in order to give them the opportunity to consult their respective assemblies while evolving a new formula to solve the disagreement. On June 6 Maciá announced that a definite understanding had been reached by workers and employers; the UGT port union, passed by, objected almost immediately.² One month later, at the

1. Madrid, op. cit., p. 151.

2. The Mocho (op. cit., pp. 311-12) suggest that Maciá was repaying a debt for CNT support in the municipal elections of April.

same time as the general telephone strike all over Spain, the dock conflict was renewed.

D. The Extraordinary CNT Congress of Madrid

In mid-May Solidaridad Obrera announced that convents were being burned in Malaga, Cadiz, Seville and Alicante, and that a general strike had been declared in Jerez de la Frontera. Martial law was declared in Andalusia. In Lerida and Sabadell the bricklayers struck in the last week in May. So, too, did the fishermen of Pasajes and they were seconded by a general strike in San Sebastian which lasted several days and involved clashes between workers and the police. As a show of solidarity, the Regional Confederation of Asturias declared a twenty-four ^{hour} general strike. Transport and commerce came to a halt at Gijón. The Asturians joined the call for the resignations of Largo Caballero and Minister of the Interior Maure. In Bilbao construction workers declared a strike in the first week of June in protest against local unemployment and against the arrests in San Sebastian.

In Zaragoza the chemical workers continued their sit-down strike, refusing to deal with the detested Comités Paritarios. On June 1, the Asturian Sindicato Unico Minero called a general strike when the Government refused to concede a seven hour day.¹ The UGT miners' union gave no support and condemned the strike. During these weeks the socialist press attacked the CNT as an organization of pistoleros, gun-men.

1. See above, p. 89, Note 2.

In mid-June Buenaventura Durruti was arrested in Gerona; a general protest strike was the immediate result. The government declared martial law but was forced to release him in order to stop the strike. The third week of June saw 14,000 textile workers in Tarrasa leave work when employers refused their demands for improved working conditions.

It was in such a turbulent atmosphere of almost unrelieved strife that, from June 11 to 16, 1931, an Extraordinary Congress of the National Confederation of Labor took place in Madrid.¹ Although there had been a number of national plenos, this was the first Congress of the CNT since the famous Comedia Congress of 1919.

The 1931 Congress has of course peculiar significance in that it came in the early days of the Republic. Four hundred and eighteen delegates representing 511 syndicates and 535,565 members attended. After Angel Pestafia, for the National Committee, opened the Congress, Rudolph Rocker, the German syndicalist leader and anarchist theorist, spoke. Rocker warned the delegates that "the democratic danger" was the greatest one facing the CNT. Workers might be tempted to accept improvement in their lot from the democratic republic; to do so would be dangerous because the democracies

1. The Regional Confederation of Catalonia held a conference from May 31 to June 1, 1931. It dealt principally with the regional newspaper and organizational problems, deciding to maintain the system of organization by provinces rather than comarcas. Reports on this Regional Conference may be found in Solidaridad Obrera, No. 167 (June 2, 1931), and No. 169 (June 4, 1931).

only support capitalism.¹ Rocker's position was the premise on which many of the activities of the CNT in the months to come were based.

Because the debates at this Congress foreshadowed CNT internal struggles and external policies during much of the Republic, it will be valuable to examine the discussions carefully.

1. The Debate on Collaborationism

Our treatment of anarcho-syndicalist conspiracies with republican politicians before the Republic was partially based on the impassioned argument in June 1931 over this past collaboration.² Later in the Madrid Congress, the problem of future collaboration under the Republic arose with the discussion of one of the issues on the agenda. This point was entitled, "Position of the C.N.T. before (ante)³ the convoking of the Constituent Cortes. Plan of political-legal-economic claims which should be presented to them."

The report of the ponencia, or commission appointed to prepare a resolution on this subject, was presented by José Villaverde, a prominent figure in the Regional Confederation of Galicia.

1. Memoria del Congreso...del 1931, p. 25.

2. See Memoria del Congreso... de 1931, pp. 48-61, 63-73, 78-81.

3. The word ante ("before", "in the presence of") was later changed to frente (meaning, in this context, "opposed to")!

The Constituent Cortes [said Villaverde] are the product of a revolutionary event, an event in which directly or indirectly we took part....We declare immediately [however] that...we expect nothing from the Constituent Cortes....We are ranged against the Constituent Cortes, as we are against all power which oppresses us. We are in open war against the State.¹

In spite of this revolutionary phraseology, Villaverde advanced a number of minimum demands to the Cortes; they immediately produced stricken cries of, "Collaborationism again!" These demands included more schools and more teachers, freedom of the press, individual liberties, the rights of association and of strike, and a solution to the unemployment problem.

...And if the people feel themselves betrayed, the C.N.T....will proceed at the opportune moment to put into play all its strength to determine the annulling of the Constituent Cortes and to begin a new revolutionary period....

...The spirit which...characterizes the C.N.T. is to accept the struggle in the street, with the proper means in direct and revolutionary action; therefore it again ratifies the fundamental principles written in the year 1919 in the Comedia Theater.²

There were instant roars of protest. The principal contention of them all was^{that} the very formulation of such demands to the Cortes implicitly recognized the efficacy of the governmental institution. Schools, yes, said one man, but "I shall never ask the State for schools."³

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, pp. 180-82.

2. Ibid., p. 187.

3. Ibid., p. 190.

Germinal Esglesa declared the report to be a deviation from the principles of the Comedia Congress.¹ Progreso Fernández of Valencia, famed for his cantankerous individualism even among anarchists, ripped into the dictamen: "The program which the ponencia has reported is a frankly collaborationist program."²

The report had its defenders. Galo Díez said that we always talk about "revolution" when we talk to the people. Yet,

...Is there anyone who finds a revolution at the turn of every corner? I was dreaming about the revolution twenty-five years ago; twenty-five years have passed and I have still not been able to wake up. There are many people in the syndicates who are not syndicalists, and we are only a minority whom we can call men of ideas, and with this material we cannot go anywhere; I have seen no one make good furniture with bad wood. I cannot see how a people without enlightenment are capable of making the revolution.³

The Republic may not be all we should like, concluded Díez, but it is certainly better than the Dictatorship.

Villaverde pointed to the current economic crisis in the capitalist world and warned that dictatorship was in the offing. And we must beware, he added, lest events sweep us along to a dictatorship like that in Russia.

The Confederation [said Villaverde] is in no condition to be able to face this historic moment.... The viewpoint is essentially anarchic and I have also many times declared that economic libertarian communism can be established this very day, but in

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 200.

2. Ibid., p. 209.

3. Ibid., p. 191.

the political and moral realm the Confederation would have to establish a dictatorship, which is against its fundamental principles. Because the working class is not in the C.N.T. There are 600,000, 700,000, a million in the Confederation. The U.G.T, according to its own statistics, has 300,000 workers.¹

Let us begin to cast our glance over the regions and we shall see how many thousands and millions are left to be organized in Spain....

...And as there are opinions and people who are not in the Confederation whom we shall want to conquer...we direct ourselves to these people from the report...in order to tell them that the minimum which they can claim is that they demand what they have contracted for, at least in the revolutionary period: that they demand liberty and the right to strike, liberty for the individual home, that there be no laws which allow the home to be violated....

...With whom do we collaborate, if there is collaboration in the report, with whom do we collaborate? With the State? Collaboration with the State accepts posts in the municipalities, in the provincial Deputations, it accepts posts in the dependent organisms of the municipalities or of parliament. Where is there one line which talks about this? Is it in saying to the State, there is no teaching in Spain and that it is necessary that what is spent on useless things should be spent on schools, is this collaborationism?...In all our newspapers and as soon as we could do so during the seven years of the dictatorship, and in the few days we were able to speak during the Berenguer dictatorship, when we went to the tribune, what did we say to the people? That it was necessary to ask absolute guarantees for the citizens, that the governing power was cruel. Was this collaborationism, was this deviation from principles? For some, perhaps yes; for me and for the comrades who share with me the responsibility of acting in the Galician region, no!...²

Juan Peiró's contribution to the quarrel was a foretaste of the treintista attitude to come later in the summer:

1. Memoria del Congreso... de 1931, p. 203.

2. Ibid., pp. 204-05.

...The C.N.T. is not ready to make a revolution.... The Confederation could perhaps conquer the capitalist State, but then it could not reconstruct the society which we all desire.¹

These, then, were two of the points of contention at the Congress of 1931 which nurtured the developing struggle within the CNT. The first was the argument over responsibility for collaboration in the pre-Republican period to bring down the Monarchy and its dictators. The second was the debate on whether the CNT should, as its future policy under the Republic, follow a course of moderation.

2. The National Federations of Industry

There was yet a third focus of strife at the Congress of 1931. This was the dispute over what were known as the Federaciones Nacionales de Industria. By a very large majority (302,343 to 90,671), the Congress voted to establish this new type of industrial organization within the CNT.²

These Federations would stand alongside the network of local, comarcal, regional and national federaciones de

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 208.

2. Ibid., p. 163.

sindicatos únicos¹ which served the CNT for general as contrasted with more technical matters:

...The mission of the National Federations of Industry is to join all the Syndicates of the industry which it represents [e.g. Construction] and coordinate their industrial action in the technical, economic and professional field without being allowed to invade other zones of syndical activities of a general type, the functions of which are completely in the hands of the Syndicates and the non-industrial federal and confederal organisms.²

1. The Catalan Regional Conference of 1918 had approved the change in the organization of CNT syndicates from craft unions or sindicatos de oficio into factory unions or sindicatos únicos de ramo o de industria. By this step, the workers of an entire industry could strike in support in the grievance of what, formerly an isolated syndicate, was now a sección of the sindicato único. For the debates on the establishment of the sindicatos únicos and a description of how they were organized, see Confederación Regional del Trabajo de Cataluña, Memoria del Congreso celebrado en Barcelona los días 28, 29, 30 de junio y 1.º de julio del año 1918 (Barcelona: Imprenta Germinal, 1918), pp. 29-45 and 101-11.

The sindicato único was adopted the following year by the national organization, but the motion of Asturian syndicalist leader Eleuterio Quintanilla to establish the Federaciones Nacionales de Industria was overwhelmingly defeated (651,473 to 14,008). For these debates, see Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, Memoria del Congreso celebrado en el Teatro de la Comedia de Madrid los días 10 al 18 de Diciembre de 1919 (Barcelona: CNT, 1932), pp. 261-65, 273-303, 307.

2. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 121.

The report which recommended the National Federations to the Congress had been prepared by Juan Peiró.¹ It argued that because modern capitalism was developing along lines of more and more concentrated industrial enterprises, the proletarian classes would have to change their own type of organization in order to meet the challenge.

The sindicatos únicos at the Catalan Congress of 1918 and the federations of industry at the CNT Congress of 1919 had been forwarded as serving two purposes, one defensive, the other offensive. The federations of industry were hailed in 1931, this time successfully, for the same two reasons. With them, it was held, we can best fight back against the capitalists, who are organized by industries. Moreover, these federations will be a fitting framework for the organization of the new society, "the day after the revolution":

The National Federation of Industry, then, serves to concentrate the initiatives and the action of the proletariat, divided into sections by industry, on a national level of opposition to capitalism, and serves, at the same time, to prepare on a practical basis, the structure of the economic apparatus of tomorrow.²

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1. Peiró's arguments for the Federaciones de Industria, as well as his outline of how the CNT should be organized, may be found in "Sindicalismo y Anarquismo" a series of fifteen articles published in !Despertad! in late 1929 and early 1930. These articles formed the basis for the dictamen on reorganization of the CNT approved by the 1931 Congress. They have been collected in a very useful little pamphlet, Problemas del Sindicalismo y del Anarquismo, (Toulouse: Ediciones Movimiento Libertario Español, 1945).

For the debates of the 1931 Congress on these Federaciones, see Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, pp.112-51, 160-63.

2. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 123.

But just as the sindicatos únicos in 1918 and the Federaciones de Industria in 1919 had been criticized as "centralizing" and a danger to the autonomy of the syndicates, so too, in 1931, the industrial federations were criticized as "Marxist" and "bureaucratic", a centralist import from Germany.

It was true that the establishment of such federations implied a more laborious and evolutionary preparation for the social revolution than the anarchist element within the CNT could accept. García Oliver led the attack for the FAI:

The Federations of Industry come from Germany and it looks as though they have come out of a barrel of beer. The A.I.T. [the Syndicalist International] people are completely ignorant of Spain; and they show their ignorance of it by falling into the error of trying to get Spain to attempt this new method of the Federations of Industry.

What do they know about Spain? If we ourselves are doubtful! What does Unamuno know about Spain, what does Genivet know about Spain, what does Azorín know about Spain? Nada. And, nonetheless, these comrades from Berlin pretend to know about it....What can these persons who talk in such a superficial way know about what we need? Can they know anything?...

Our organization is purely Spanish and the people are preparing to make a mass revolution and for that they need to go against the current of the Spanish soul. Therefore we cannot accept the Federations of Industry, because they carry within themselves disintegration, they kill the mass which we must always have ready to be able to throw it against the State....¹

1. Memoria del Congreso...de 1931, p. 147.

García Oliver's passion was in vain; the moderates were in the saddle now;¹ the federations were voted in. The faístas sulked away to nurse their wounds and prepare to do battle--against the patronal, against the Republic and against the hated "reformists".

1. Dr. Franz Borkenau states that the FAI was founded in 1925 and that "since then only members of the FAI can hold positions of trust in the CNT". The Spanish Cockpit (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p. 37. The first statement is in error and the second statement is of course quite untrue.

CHAPTER IV

STRIKES AND RUMORS OF STRIKES:

THE REPUBLIC WAVERS ON

A. The Telephone Strike

The young Republic had already faced a plague of strikes in its two months of existence. But the first really big one was the telephone strike of July, 1931. Under the Dictatorship, the telephone lines had been given over as a perpetual concession to an American company on conditions extraordinarily favorable to the company. For example, the company was free of all taxes, national, provincial and municipal. In a speech at the Ateneo of Madrid on April 25, Indalecio Prieto, the Socialist Party leader, promised that the Republic would correct this robbery and invalidate the contract of concession.

But the Republic came and no change appeared in the organization of the Compañía Telefónica Nacional de España. On July 6 a national strike was declared by the telephone operatives. Of the 7,000 personnel employed, 6,200 struck throughout Spain and 2,200 of them were in Madrid. They were members of the Sindicato de Teléfonos (CNT), the only existing labor organization in this field.¹

1. Jacinto Toryho, "Bosquejo del período prerrevolucionario", Timón, No. 4 (October, 1938), 86. Much of the material in this article was later published in J. Toryho, La Independencia de España (Barcelona: Editorial Tierra y Libertad, 1938).

The operators demanded recognition of their union by the company, reduction in the extremely high managerial salaries, the rehiring of all dismissed employees and a number of other reforms. Because the concession contract had not authorized the company to fire workers, the Jurado Mixto Telefónica granted such permission.

Miguel Maura, Minister of the Interior, refused to allow negotiation between the telephone company and the workers. Prieto, a member of the Government as well, was largely responsible for bringing about the defeat of the strikers but not until much sabotage and some violence had occurred. Over 2,000 CNT members were arrested throughout the country during the conflict.

In Madrid the workers attacked the Central Telephone Building--el Gibraltar en el Gran Vía, it was called--but were defeated. They were finally left in a worse position than before; the socialists took advantage of the upheaval to weaken the CNT syndicate and to strengthen their own forces. Largo Caballero looked benignly on from the Ministry of Labor while the company established a second union, the Organización Telefónica Obrera, which later joined the UGT.

In late June and throughout July 1931, Andalusia, where unemployment was very severe among the campesinos, again became the center of strife. Harvests were burned and in Seville a strike occurred which led to fighting between workers and government forces and a number of dead and wounded. Martial law was proclaimed in the province of Seville.

Arrests of persons carrying CNT carnets were ordered, confederal syndicates closed and the Ley de Fugas (the police shooting ^{of} prisoners "trying to escape") was applied.¹ "So long," said the anarcho-syndicalist press, "as Maura and Largo Caballero continue in the Government, there can be no peace here...."²

B. The Barcelona Docks Again

In Barcelona Carlos Esplá had become Civil Governor on June 1, after Companys resigned to become a deputy to the Cortes. Esplá found the CNT and the UGT still in bitter struggle. For example, on June 9 a clash among workers resulted from a dispute between CNT and UGT forces over prolongation of a strike. The CNT wanted to stay out; the UGT urged a return to the wood factory concerned.

But the port was still the thorn: on July 7, members of the anarcho-syndicalist Sindicato Unico del Ramo de Transportes were responsible for a partial yet crippling strike at the Barcelona docks. General López Ochoa, chief military commander in the region, anticipated a CNT strike among the gas and electrical workers as well and asked Madrid to send

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1. The situation in Seville was of course much publicized by the CNT press elsewhere in Spain. See "Un documento de la Confederación Regional del Trabajo de Andalucía a la Opinión Pública", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 219 (August 1, 1931), 2-3, and a series of articles by Agustín Gibanel, who was sent there, entitled, "Después de los trágicos sucesos de Sevilla", Solidaridad Obrera, Nos. 231-235 (August 16-20, 1931).
 2. "Las Voces de Alerta", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 226 (August 9, 1931), 1.

him certain reinforcements. No such strike took place in these services but on the eighth, the port strike increased in intensity. Two weeks later a high explosive bomb went off in the Telephone Building and Barcelona was hit by a wave of strikes: taxi drivers, barbers, printers, tailors, the dockers again, bricklayers, cabinetmakers and some metal workers. Workers and police fought several times on the twenty-third; there was shooting in the streets.

Said Juan Peiró from Solidaridad Obrera:

The Confederation is not to blame for the innumerable strikes executed, because these have been decided on by the respective Committees.... It will not go on general strike in Barcelona nor in the rest of Spain, although it cannot answer for any Federation acting as it thinks fit.¹

Peiró was certainly right about the Confederation not being able to answer for the actions of any particular federation. So uncoordinated were strikes and risings in this chaotic period that CNT (and UGT) strikers were unable to resist police action as effectively as they might have otherwise done.

...Whenever the anarcho-syndicalists ordained that the Great Day had dawned, the police seemed better informed about the details of the revolution than most of the workers. The syndicalist trade-union federation, for instance, would call a strike without the sanction of the anarchist political federation; a local union, or a group of unions in a city might issue strike orders without the benediction of the central body of the trade-union federation....With so much antagonism among rival proletarian organizations the strikes could never become the demonstrations of a strong or well-knit labor movement; they remained an amorphous

1. Quoted in Madrid, op. cit., p. 179.

expression of the desire of the working classes to force a more revolutionary course upon the government.¹

The Minister of Labor, Largo Caballero, was, after all, a socialist. Could he do nothing for the laboring masses? "In my eyes," said he, with a conciliatory look toward the Barcelona industrialists, these strikes are

....just as unpatriotic as the emigration of those who take their capital with them in order to boycott Spain....The working class, which cannot abandon its demands once the Republic is firmly established, must in the meantime consent to a truce.²

C. The Strike Wave Continues

"The hour has come!" warned Tierra y Libertad, the FAI newspaper in Barcelona.

The moment is decisive. Either we permit vile and cowardly assassination in the streets and allow our bulwark, the C.N.T., to be destroyed by the work and wit of Maura, Galarza and Largo Caballero; or we throw ourselves valiantly into the street, declare the revolutionary general strike all over Spain, definitely give battle to these miserable people who wrongly hold power and who machine-gun the people in mockery of Spanish citizenship, and we finish off these assassins, imitators and continuations of Martínez [Anido] and Arlegui [his Chief of Police during the pistolero era in Barcelona]³

In late August, Esplá also left for the Cortes. Oriol Anguera de Sojo, formerly President of the Audiencia, became third Civil Governor in Barcelona. He clearly did not assume office at a happy time. Efforts to achieve, if not

1. Frank Manuel, The Politics of Modern Spain (New York: McGraw Hill Co., 1938), p. 81.

2. Ibid., p. 80.

3. Alfonso Nieves, "¡Llegó la hora!", Tierra y Libertad, No. 26 (August 15, 1931), p. 4.

collaboration with the CNT, at least a tacit agreement not to make undue trouble fell on stony ground.

The leaders of the Confederation wanted, or at least it seemed they wanted, to maintain the apoliticism of the Confederation which was its nominal strength, to give a reformist air to the organization, like the syndicalist movement which Jouhaux leads in France....[But] extremist syndicalism dominated the greater part of the Confederation. The power of the Anarchist Federation captivated the proletarian masses....Now, the directors of the Confederation were dominated and compelled by the elements of the F.A.I....¹

In spite of their theoretical devotion to the principle of direct action, some CNT workers had come to the Civil Government on their own initiative seeking agreement in a number of disputes. On one occasion, they conferred with the representatives of the provincial government at a meeting which lasted over eighteen hours in order to prevent a possible strike of metal workers.

Such instances only intensified the FAI drive to prevent further moves in the direction of reformism. When Anguera de Sojo examined the statutes brought to him by anarcho-syndicalist unions, he found them not in accord with the Ley de Asociaciones. His impatience and irritation is testimony to the complexity of ascertaining where the real decision-making power lay within the anarchist organizations:

Notice, said Sr. Anguera de Sojo, that in the rules, Juntas Directivas and democratic Assemblies are constantly referred to, but as soon as these rules are approved, the social and public life of

1. Madrid, op. cit., pp. 185-187.

"El Comité" or "La Comisión" blossoms forth. "El Comité" and "La Comisión" are the real force of the whole movement. We arrest the Junta Directiva and it knows nothing about what is going on. We try to arrest the Committee and the Committee does not appear. Subterfuges before the law are of no avail. The Junta Directiva is the Junta Directiva and therefore responsible for whatever the organization does or says. The Committee does not exist because it is not mentioned in the rules, nor have they authority to collect funds and transfer them to other entities. There must be obedience to the law. If it is good or bad, then reform it, but while the law exists, it must be equal, inflexible and categorical for everyone.¹

Such a plea did not of course bring into the open the constellation of anarchist groups which directed (when they were not spontaneous) the staccato-like pace of the strikes and sabotage. Nor did it diminish the sweeping nature of the often fantastic (and at times not so fantastic) petitions of the anarchists to the patronos. The Federación de Fabricantes de Hilados y Tejidos, or Textile-makers' Federation, for instance, was so outraged by one list of CNT demands that it would not even discuss them.²

1. Madrid, op. cit., p. 191.

2. The demands of the anarcho-syndicalists included recognition of the union and of the CNT comités de fábricas and of the delegates of these committees, recognition and use by the employers of the Bolsa de Trabajo or labor exchanges of the Sindicatos del Arte Fabril y Textil de Cataluña (CNT) when hiring new workers, no more piece-work, a forty-four work week (thirty-six if a night shift), and no night work for women or for children under sixteen.

Every factory would have its own CNT Committee which would solve all conflicts directly with the employer, which would advise the employer of the reasons for a worker's absence from the shop, and which could exercise a veto over the employer's right to dismiss an employee. Certain sanitary conditions in the factory, accident and illness insurance provisions, pensions at the age of fifty, two weeks paid holidays and restrictions on child labor were further stipulations. The full text of this petition may be found in Madrid, op. cit., pp. 191-95.

D. The Rift Develops

The month of August 1931 continued to be rampant with strikes: workers in the rubber industry, nurses in Barcelona hospitals, miners in Cardona; later, taxi-drivers, some textile weavers, men from the fishing boats and employees in the silk factory of Prat de Llobregat. The most important strike was announced on August 3 by workers throughout the metallurgy industry. Their manifesto was a tremendous blast at the government organ, the Fomento Nacional del Trabajo, for having meddled in the affair and for exercising "dictatorial" control over Catalan employees. Forty thousand workers went on strike.

Anguera de Sojo decided to intervene in the conflict and he did so with a vengeance. On August 28 he brought representatives of the employers' Unión Industrial Metalúrgica and the Sindicato Unico de la Metalurgia to his office. He refused to allow them to leave until they had reached an understanding. After hours of negotiation, the weary disputants emerged to announce an accord. The most important features of the agreement were recognition of the union and the establishment of a minimum wage.¹

But in mid-August the National Committee of the CNT denounced this wave of unorganized strikes, and drew more fire from the FAI.

1. For the text of this agreement, see "La huelga de la metalurgia se ha solucionado", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 244 (August 30, 1931), 12.

...We believe... [said the Committee circular] that the Syndicates are provoking excessive conflicts, causing many of them to be lost because they lack indispensable moral and material support, when in fact they should have been won.¹

The Committee urged the CNT to agree that syndicates should first obtain agreement from Local, Regional or Comarcal Federations of Syndicates before going on strike. Otherwise, a syndicate would have little claim to the automatic support of other syndicates. Syndical autonomy, yes, said the Committee, but not irresponsible jeopardizing of the success of strikes by abuse of the right of autonomy.²

Such a warning was in keeping with the syndicalist doctrine being preached by the moderates within the CNT. You had better not tear down the Republic unless you are ready to put something better in its place, "Soli" cautioned Diego Abad de Santillán:

We do not share the judgment of those who unreservedly praise the social revolution without knowing what they want. Without knowing what they want, because when you ask them where we shall go after having thrown themselves into the street, they reply that when we are in the street, we shall then see where we must go....³

Agustín Gibanel, soon to sign the Treintista manifesto, said scornfully:

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1. "Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, a Todos los Sindicatos", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 232 (August 16, 1931), 4.
 2. Ibid.
 3. "Republicanism or Socialism", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 216 (July 29, 1931), 8.

...We see the organ of the F.A.I. [Tierra y Libertad] announce the revolution every week, without its appearing anywhere, exactly the same as the bolshevist Press, and exactly the same as the bolshevist Press coinciding in systematic attacks against the confederal action of the organization, against its militants; giving the impression that the anarchist Press and bolshevist Press are disputing for superiority in imposing their will on the working class, without realizing that in the last resort the congresses or regular plenums are the ones which must decide on action and that the will of the workers is expressed in the syndicates, that there can be no will other than that which the members of the syndicates freely declare in their assemblies.¹

"Organization, preparation"--these were the key words to the syndicalist approach. "Every day it is less possible to deny that the social revolution is a problem of economic and industrial organization":

Anarcho-syndicalists believe that the practical form for realizing the social revolution is in the Syndicates linked together by industries, and they think that only [the Syndicates], by their dominion in the world of production, are in the position to organize [production] and guarantee it in benefit of the Revolution and of liberty....²

But, complained feista Alejandro Gilabert,

...Is the revolution a problem of organization? Is it not, on the contrary, a question of audacity which, at a given moment puts into play the impetuous force which is rooted in the hearts of the masses, who can be mobilized by frequent incidents which happen in the life of peoples? Is it the economy which determines events or is it the will of men? ³

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1. "El anarquismo y el movimiento actual", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 239 (August 25, 1931), 8.
 2. "La misión social del sindicalismo", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 185 (June 23, 1931), 1.
 3. Alejandro G. Gilabert, La C.N.T., la F.A.I. y la Revolución Española (Barcelona: Biblioteca Tierra y Libertad, 1932?), p. 14.

The great debate which exploded to the surface at the National Congress of June 1931 and smoldered along through the summer was moving to a climax. On the first day of September, 1931, there occurred one of the most significant events in the history of the modern anarchist movement in Spain. The syndicalist group within the National Confederation of Labor published a manifesto in Barcelona, which, because it was signed with thirty names, came to be known as the Treintista Declaration.¹

1. See Appendix A for the complete text of this manifesto.

CHAPTER V.

TREINTISTAS AND FAISTAS

A. The Treintista Declaration

The first signature on the treintista statement was that of Juan López. López is a moderate syndicalist who was later to become Minister of Commerce in the first Civil War Government of Largo Caballero. In 1945, López, criticizing an article by one Antonio Vidal Dalmau,¹ gave what is perhaps the only written account of how the controversial declaration came into being.

...It is not true [said López in this valuable statement] that the Manifesto of "the thirty" came to show a new road to follow" or that "out of spite ... they created the Syndicalist Party"².... I know those events in all their extension and intimacy, by having lived them and been one of the signers, and I can, therefore, reconstruct from memory what is most important. My signature heads the list of signers.

In speaking of those events, we must remember, more than "the treinta", a struggle of tendencies within the C.N.T., determined by two differing conceptions concerning the...revolutionary tactics of the C.N.T. The two tendencies were incarnated on the one hand in the F.A.I., and on the other, in "the treinta". The treinta were the signers of the thus named manifesto, but the militants identified with the thesis of it were many thousands, and from the viewpoint of the discipline of the organization, the manifesto interpreted the principles of the C.N.T...

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1. "El manifiesto de los 'treinta'", in a pamphlet by Vidal Dalmau titled La emancipación de los trabajadores ha de ser obra de los trabajadores mismos (Algiers, 1944), pp.33-34.
 2. A small reformist political party founded by Pestaña in 1934. See below pp. 207-09.

The third Congress of the C.N.T. [continued López] had been held in the summer of 1931 in Madrid. At the same time as the confederal Congress, the first Congress of the F.A.I. took place, also in Madrid. Thus many of the delegates who attended the confederal Congress were at the same time delegates to the F.A.I. one. This fact permitted [the FAI] to discuss affairs in its sessions concerning the syndical Congress and bring together the maximum number of judgments so as to intervene, to vote, etc., in the deliberations of the C.N.T....¹

This FAI National Conference was attended by representatives of anarchist groups, ateneos and newspapers. The delegates voted their disapproval of the activity of the Peninsular Committee which acted in the final quarter of 1931, "because of its collaborationism with the political and military elements". The Conference decided to hold a propaganda tour throughout Spain beginning in August. Then the delegates agreed, significantly, "to increase greatly their activity in the National Confederation of Labor".²

Doubtless [said López] owing to this [intervention of the FAI] the sessions of the confederal Congress were charged with passion, polemical virulence and useless temperamental talk.... But the results of the confederal Congress were not favorable to the thesis of the F.A.I. The Federations of Industry were approved by an overwhelming majority of votes, and the same thing happened on other points that were debated.

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1. Juan López, "Recordatorio: La Historia No Debe Repetirse", Material de Discusión Para los Militantes de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo de España, Cuarta Serie (April 20, 1945); typescript, mimeographed (Milford Haven, England: Juan López), p. 16.
 2. "El Pleno de la F.A.I.", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 182 (June 19, 1931), 4.

At the same time as controversy came action, which consisted in securing the maximum control of the directive organs of the C.N.T. in order "to accelerate the process of the revolution." For this reason Comrade Vidal writes that we were "vigorously against revolutions in a fixed space of time". When the Congress was over, the fulfillment of the agreements became a secondary consideration according to the militants of the [FAI]. They believed it possible to make the revolution immediately, before the Republic could consolidate itself. Such was their conception of tactics. I shall cite one of the examples which show how they acted.

A little after the confederal Congress [López continued] there took place a Plenum of Syndicates in Barcelona on Cabañas street, in the quarter of Pueblo Seco.¹ The Catalan regional then had nearly half a million members. I attended that plenum, delegated by my Syndicate. García Oliver and Durruti were delegated by the Syndicates of the Fabric and Textile Industry of Barcelona. In one of the sessions, the Fabric and Textile delegation proposed that a secret session be held. This was agreed to and when the secret session was opened, Oliver and Durruti presented a revolutionary plan and proposed that the plenum should agreed to allot to the Comité de Defensa charged with carrying it out, the extraordinary quota which the Congress of the² C.N.T. in Madrid had decided all members of the Confederation should pay in order to set up a fund to make possible the publication of the daily "CNT", which was named to be a national organ. It was a matter of a single and extraordinary quota. If I recall, it was some two pesetas per confederate. The plenum refused the proposition, considering it an infraction of the agreements of the Congress, but it caused an impression on the minds of the delegates. Some had approved the proposal in good will. Others considered the procedure unacceptable from the viewpoint of organizational discipline because it was a relaxation of the confederal rules.

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1. For reports of the discussions and agreements of this conference, see Solidaridad Obrera, Nos. 221-25, 227-28 (August 4-8, 11-12, 1931).
 2. *Italics López'.*

The tactics of attempted infiltration into the CNT which the FAI pressed with such vigor at the Cabañas street meeting were methodically extended to all the organs of the CNT, said López. The FAI groups stepped up their activity in the trade unions, the local federations and the comarcal and regional committees; they campaigned relentlessly for the revolution. The members of the CNT National Committee, of the Regional Committee and the editorial staff of Solidaridad Obrera realized that the CNT was being swept into actions which the masses who belonged to the CNT and the anarcho-syndicalist militants who were not in the FAI knew nothing about.¹

...The exchange of impressions among comrades who had posts of responsibility with others who at that time did not have them caused a meeting which was held in the home of the Transport Syndicate. The situation was set forth and each comrade gave his viewpoint. I do not remember now the number who attended that meeting, but I do recall Juan Peiró, Pedro Massoni, Progreso Alfarache, Agustín Gibanel, Angel Pestaña, E. Arín, Roca, Piñón, Joaquín Cortes, Sebastián Clara and several others.

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1. Said the delegate from Fábrica y Textil of Barcelona at the Zaragoza Congress of May, 1936, at which the split in the CNT was healed:

"During the fight between the Opposition and the C.N.T., we used every weapon to win....At the beginning we were defeated. When we sought to impose directors of our preference on SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA, we scarcely had any votes. But we declared no split. We continued fighting with ardor. And we went to the Congress of 1931...and we were defeated in the votes [but] we already had a force. We went later to the Cabañas street plenum; we won this time and in four days, the manifesto of 'The Treinta' appeared." Solidaridad Obrera, No.1269 (May 8, 1936), 1.

This faista textile union speaker claims that the FAI "won" at Cabañas street; López says the Durruti-García Oliver motion lost. The point to be made, in spite of the ambiguity here, is that this plenum was an impressive demonstration of the upsurge in FAI strength.

The proposition [said López] of publishing a manifesto signed personally by militants was made by Francisco Arín. Angel Pestana was designated to compose it and once written, we were to meet to discuss its contents. At the second meeting the manifesto was read; it provoked a lengthy discussion. There being no agreement, it was decided to make a new draft....In the third meeting...a commission of three was named which, on the basis of what had been written by Pestana and the amendments which were proposed, was to make a definitive draft. This commission was composed of Agustín Gibanel, Progreso Alfarache and Ricardo Fornells. And in a subsequent meeting, finally, the manifesto was approved. From that group was also born the suggestion of a weekly newspaper, the title of which, "Cultura Libertaria", was proposed by Peiro and accepted. Gibanel was named editor.

The manifesto, clearly, was not an improvised document. The fruit of laborious discussion by those who participated in it, it contained the synthesis of confederal thought and it developed the thesis of two fundamental principles: the right of the C.N.T. to decide all its actions as an independent entity, and the counter-assertion that the revolution which it seeks cannot be the work and action of an audacious minority, but a constructive undertaking of the masses.... As I have said, then, it was not pointing any new way but was limited to defending the sovereignty of the Syndicates and to proclaiming that their revolution should be the result of solid preparation by the C.N.T.; and when the C.N.T. should decide on it, it would have to be made. Without any doubt, this manifesto was a clear manifesto against the activity which the F.A.I. was promoting outside the Syndicates to force through courses of action of which the C.N.T. itself was unaware.

1. López, op. cit., pp. 17-18 .

Juan García Oliver, of course, explains the Treintista Manifesto in a much different way:

...Actually its content was only the reflection of the disgust of a group of militants who could not reconcile themselves to the historic fact of having lost, in less than one year, prestige--and leadership--in the C.N.T. It is quite simple to explain how the battle of faísmo against treintismo and the complete defeat of the latter happened. When the Republic came in Spain some of the old confederal militants felt socially and politically satisfied with the mediocre bourgeois content of the new republic and they were for renouncing the traditional spirit of social revolution of the C.N.T. and adapting our Organization to the republican situation. How did they intend to do it? I don't think they themselves knew because this was the role of the Unión General de Trabajadores and the Partido Obrero Socialista Español. They forgot that it is not easy to halt the march of events and that it is less, much less easy to produce, in the social make-up of a country so eminently social as ours, the enormous vacuum which the withdrawal of the C.N.T. from social radicalism would have meant. This vacuum would have been filled at once by the communist party or by fascism. Therefore the radical militancy of the C.N.T., which some call faista and some call anarcho-sindicalist, could easily conquer treintismo at the same time that it considerably increased the confederal membership throughout the country, even raising the menace of absorbing the worker contingents of the Unión General de Trabajadores.

B. The FAI Moves Ahead

September was a stormy month. The Treintista Declaration would itself have been enough to make it so. Yet in addition to this bombshell, on September 1 fifty CNT prisoners in Barcelona announced a hunger strike.

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1. In a letter to the writer, March 9, 1953. García Oliver, now 51, is at present a travel agent in Guadalajara, Mexico. He joined the CNT when he was 17.

And the telephone conflict wore on.

"Soli" scathingly continued to argue against revolution for the sake of revolution:

...To throw the masses into the street to receive blows from truncheons and machine-guns, as the communists without communism do, is a very easy thing, but whoever does so, rather than being a revolutionary, is a moral assassin.¹

But the very day after this editorial the masses did flow into the street. On September 3 a tremendous general strike broke out in Barcelona. It was a protest against Anguera de Sojo on behalf of the government prisoners. Even "Soli" supported it:

...The only thing you can say about the last general strike is that it was decreed by an explosion of sentimentality and...without anyone's taking care to give it a concrete orientation and a determined goal....²

The strike lashed out across the entire city: almost all trade and transport stopped. Barricades were raised in some working-class quarters. In the streets there was shooting between police and workers. A particularly severe clash occurred in Mercaders street when the police attacked the headquarters of the construction syndicate to confiscate a supply of arms. Several deaths and a number of wounded resulted before the workers surrendered.

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1. "Proceso de Formación", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 246 (September 2, 1931), 1.
 2. "Porqué y para qué de la huelga general", ibid., No. 249 (September 8, 1931), 1.

Nearly three hundred arrests were made during the strike. Three members of the CNT were shot dead by the police in front of the Jefatura Superior de Policía. One story was that on the way to the station, several prisoners sought to escape. "According to others, the nervousness of the guards saw the gesture of pulling a gun in any untoward movement of those under arrest, and they fired."¹ No matter which explanation is true, the anarchists had more martyrs. The Republican government is as bad as all the rest: cried the CNT press.²

Federica Montseny's excited (as usual) pen quivered. The last two weeks, she said on September 18, have brought us:

In the first place, the manifesto of the group of militants whom the bourgeois press, Maciá and Companys, have called the "sensible part of the Confederation"; in the second place, the Barcelona strike, caused by the unspeakably bad attitude of the governor Anguera de Sojo, Maura's henchman, toward the prisoners. Thirdly, an editorial in "Solidaridad Obrera", a historic document which some day, if the person who wrote it has not completely lost his virility and shame, will make him blush.

1. Madrid, op. cit., p. 232.

2. Andrés Nin said of the September strike:

"We shall not be the ones to deny the importance of the role played by the elements of the F.A.I. in the declaration of the movement.... [But] the elements of the F.A.I. are capable of provoking only mass movements without future, or heroic isolated but, in the end, sterile actions. The magnificent defense of the Construction Syndicate by some dozens of admirable militants has made manifest the treasure of combativeness and self-denial which the working class contains and it has shown the marvels which it can produce if only a coherent [i.e. Trotskyist] direction and discipline existed." "La huelga general de Barcelona", Comunismo, I, No. 5 (October, 1931), pp. 17-18.

The FAI denied that it had any part in the declaration of the strike and pointed to the fact that the strike had been decided by a plenum of the Barcelona Local Federation of Syndicates three days before it occurred. The FAI neglected to mention, however, the very strong influence of faistas in the Barcelona syndical local.

...The immediate result of all this has been the start of a violent repression against all the outstanding individuals of the F.A.I. and the beginning of a dismembering, of an internal crisis within the Confederation, for which the anarchists will be made responsible, the famous extremists....

...The bourgeoisie and public opinion in general... watch and applaud the fight which has begun within the C.N.T., between rightists and leftists, between those who want to make the Confederation an appendage of the Generalitat and of the Izquierda Republicana de Cataluña, and those who represent the libertarian spirit within the Confederation....

The events of Barcelona, the assassinations of the Police Station, the attitude of intransigence and insanity of the governor, in not finding the entire proletariat mobilized for combat, in a unanimous protest--a protest which could have been made, with the masses responding--open a wide field to the repressive activities of this republic which defends capitalistic interests and is personified in the despotic figure of the future dictator Maura....

Finally, the promises contracted with Macià by the leaders of syndicalism, with a view to the approval of the famous Statute, just complete our picture: once Catalonia has a Statute, a social policy will begin which is tolerant of the "good little boys" of the C.N.T. but will "tighten the screws on the F.A.I."--Company's phrase--the famous so-called extremists, extremists being all those who are not ready for the Confederation to be in Barcelona what the U.G.T. is in Madrid [or not ready for a] Catalanized C.N.T. with its National Committee installed here for life, paying no attention to the rest of Spain, as it has already ignored the strikes in Seville and Zaragoza....

And the Spanish proletariat, divided, broken up, reduced to sporadic movements, sterilized for all united action, its elements of action bled of boldness and of spiritual dynamism by the persecution started against the anarchists and against the anarcho-syndicalists conscious of their duty and their ideas, will be easy to dominate, manageable for the dog-tamer's hand which rules the Ministry of the Interior.

...And here, in the pasis of the Statute, in the Paradise which the good faith of Macià promises us... a Confederation converted into a fourth hand in the new Council of a Hundred of Catalonia; a Confederation domesticated, governmentalized; with an olive branch policy, of harmony between capital and labor; a labor Confederation, English style....

With respect to the F.A.I., the frightful F.A.I., the terrible F.A.I.... oh, gentlemen, citizens, brothers of the peoples of Iberia! the screws will be tightened on it, yes sir, with a little twist on the crank, with a vigorous turn, from Maura and Companys to the last worthy of the editorial staff of "Solí", without forgetting the ineffable Lluhi y Vallesca and the poor man Maciá, who has been made to think that the F.A.I. is a mythological monster, a Minotaur or a Dragon before which Theseus's and Saint George's are of no avail....¹

Three days after Federica's tirade, the "mythological monster" breathed fire:

On the 21st day of September, the F.A.I. took over the organ of the National Confederation of Labor. Up to that time, they had been undermining all the Committees and the Juntas, but now they were going to the definitive assault: the editorial staff of "Solidaridad Obrera".... [The staff] could no longer resist the tyranny of some Committees which obliged them to play a role not their own....²

"An irrevocable resolution" was published a day later:

It is necessary for the organization of Catalonia to decide once and for all to throw off the onerous tutelage of those who work moved by interests contrary to the specific ones of the C.N.T. We have come to the point where it is advisable, where it is compelling in an overbearing and unavoidable way, for the C.N.T. to resign itself either to vegetate under the interference of irresponsible organisms before the great mass of the proletariat, or for the C.N.T. to reclaim its personality and its own principles and throw overboard the ballast of incomprehension and irresponsibility which, morally and collectively, is destroying what should and can be the representative organism of the revolutionary proletariat of Spain.

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1. "La crisis interna y externa de la Confederación", El Luchador, No. 37 (September 18, 1931), 1. Italics Montseny's.
 2. Madrid, op. cit., pp. 248-49.

It is the hour of decision, and the signers of the letter which follows are starting by leaving the road clear for the organization of Catalonia to trace the route it thinks best.¹

The letter which followed concluded with these words:

...We shall be very grateful to this Committee [of the Regional Confederation of Catalonia] if it will take advantage of the opportunity which the next Plenum of Comarcals offers to read this letter and with it reckon our collective resignation, with an irrevocable character, from the posts which up to now we have been holding on SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA.... J. Peiró, Sebastián Clara, Ricardo Fornells, Agustín Fornells, Agustín Gibanell, Ramon Magre.²

Felipe Aláiz had also been named to the editorial staff of "Soli" by the Regional Conference in June, 1931. Aláiz did not resign in September. Supported by the FAI, he was elected the next director at a stormy regional meeting in mid-October.³

In this same month of October, Manuel Azana's new Government of Left Republicans and Socialists were greeted with a general strike in Granada, one in Cadiz, a national glassblowers' strike, a railway strike and, as a piece de résistance, a general strike by the Barcelona dockworkers.

Azana replied with the harsh Law of the Defense of the Republic. Said Solidaridad Obrera:

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1. "Una resolución irrevocable", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 261 (September 22, 1931), 1.
 2. Ibid.
 3. "Impresiones del Pleno Regional", El Luchador, No. 42 (October 23, 1931), 3.

The repression is entering an acute phase. The law of Defense of the Republic is the pretext for intensifying the persecution of the C.N.T. and making the regular functioning of the Syndicates impossible.¹

The numerous strikes brought clashes between workers and police and many arrests. The Antonio López, a prison ship in the port of Barcelona, was rapidly filled. In early November, a strike of sympathy for the Barcelona dockworkers spread from Gijón harbor to the Altos Hornos plant in Bilbao, and, in December, to the metal workers of La Felguera and the miners of Asturias. Several syndicates were closed.

In Barcelona Anguera de Sojo suspended CNT meetings and closed down the transport syndicate. "Soli" said scathingly:

Anguera de Sojo will not go to heaven. All the devils of hell will be with him there and he will fall into caldrons of boiling oil and be devoured like a fritter... [this] jailer by vocation, servant of the moneyed interests and master of hounds that can't smell....²

In December security guards in Huesca shot some CNT workers who were on the way to a memorial meeting at the graves of the heroes of Jaca, Fermín Galán and García Hernández; a protest strike ensued. The telephone strike persisted and the conflict at the "Seda" factory in the Prat del Llobregat, already five months long, became more severe. A general

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1. "La Defensa de la República: La ofensiva contra la C.N.T.", No. 287 (October 22, 1931), 1. Among other provisions this law penalized by fine or exile a number of "acts of aggression on the Republic". See Sir George Young, The New Spain (London: Methuen & Co., 1933), p.144 for a summary of the law.
 2. "Anguera de Sojo, toga intrusa", No. 317 (November 26, 1931), 1.

strike of CNT workers occurred in Zaragoza and one worker was killed, several were wounded and more jailed. On the morning of December 17, a bitter clash at the Barcelona docks resulted in the application of the Ley de Fugas by assault guards. One worker was shot and a number of others wounded.

El Luchador printed photographs of the dead and wounded in these strikes and attacked the National Committee of the CNT for not lending more support to the strikers, especially in Asturias, Aragon and Seville. Throughout these final months of 1931, Peiró and Pestaña made public addresses defending the treintista position. Treintistas criticized the new editors of Solidaridad Obrera at the Catalan Regional Plenum in Lerida in early December. El Luchador complained about the semi-secrecy of some of the meetings of the national plenum of regional organizations which met in Madrid later in December. The treintistas began publishing their own Cultura Libertaria. The feud within the C.N.T, then, kept pace with the anarcho-syndicalist struggle in the outside world of employers and governors.

A delegation from the Syndicalist International arrived in Spain to try to settle the internal dispute. Representatives of both wings met in the headquarters of the metallurgy syndicate in Barcelona, but the A.I.T. attempt failed.¹ No agreement was possible. La escisión was to be still further deepened by the dramatic events with which the new year opened.

1. Pérez y Pérez, "Las Ramas y el Tronco", Material de Discusion..., 9... , Segunda Serie (January 31, 1945), 14.

CHAPTER VI.LLOBREGAT RISING AND CNT SPLITA. The Rising of January, 1932

I am writing [said Federica Montseny] ...on the 25th day of January, 1932.... The revolt of pueblos in the Alto Llobregat, which will pass into history as the first serious attempt at social revolution in Spain since the one at Jerez in 1892, has already been suffocated; it is likely that, by the time these pages see the light, the vanquished ones of Sallent, Berga, Cardona, Suria and Fígols are already on the road to Fuerteventura [an island in the Canaries to which Unamuno had been exiled under the Dictatorship].¹

Fígols, Berga, Sallent, Cardona, Bellver de Cinca, Sollana, Puerto de Sagunto, Montserrat de Valencia, Castell de Cabra; Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia; mine and field, farm and factory....

It is the beginning, the start of the revolution, the first stage along the path....In ten Spanish municipalities the red and black flag has already waved, ancient signal of a cause, symbol of struggle, countersign of a universal brotherhood of humans who want to realize the dream of happiness, equality and liberty....²

On January 18 anarcho-syndicalist workers in the mining region of the Alto Llobregat and Cardoner in Catalonia had launched a rising which resulted, until it was put down by

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1. "Ante un grave momento de la historia de España", El Luchador, No. 56 (January 29, 1931), 1.
 2. "Pueblos Miseros y Pueblos Heroicos de España", ibid., No. 58 (February 12, 1931), 1.

government forces, in five days of Comunismo Libertario.¹
Miners in Figols, part of the comarca of the Alto Llobregat,
and in Manresa and Berga took over the town halls, and the
movement thereafter spread to other provinces.

You see, cried Evelio Fontaura,

Anarchy can be realized. No, it is not a utopian ideal, as these men in the Llobregat comarca, who have known how to win a few days of liberty, have shown. It is necessary only for the proletariat to desire, it is necessary only that there be men of good will who feel the necessity of anarchist realizations.²

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1. Mr. Brennan (op.cit., p.254) contends that the Izquierda Comunista party, "a group of 'Trotskyists' led by Maurín, Nin and Andrade", also participated in this rising. I can find no mention in either El Soviet or Comunismo, the Left Communist weekly and monthly, that this group had any part in the revolt. Had the party played any role at all, however, its press would certainly have said so. The group was very small and needed any revolutionary prestige it could muster. It is true that the Left Communists regarded the FAI as genuine but doctrinally misguided revolutionaries, while they were completely scornful of the treintistas. "El primer movimiento [January 1932] fue pura F.A.I.", says Horacio Prieto. Op. cit., p.66 (*italics his*).

With respect to Maurín moreover, Jordi Arquer, who worked in the same party with him and so should know, states bluntly in a letter to the writer, Paris, May 1, 1953: "Joaquín Maurín no ha sido nunca trotskista".

At the time of the Llobregat rising and even after it Maurín was the guiding spirit of another small non-Stalinist communist party: the Bloque Obrero y Campesino. Mr. Brennan (op. cit., p.296) suggests that Maurín founded this party after the 1933 elections. But the BOC was manifestly in existence before 1933 and subject to constant criticism from the Left Communists. See, for example, "La política sindical del Bloque Obrero Campesino", El Soviet, No. 8 (June 16, 1932), 4.

The BOC newspaper was called La Batalla. In September 1935 and not in February 1936 as Mr. Brennan says (op. cit., pp. xx, 296); the BOC and the Left Communists fused to form the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista, or POUM. See below, p. 392.

2. "Las Obras y los Días", Acción Social Obrera, No.187 (February 13, 1932), 1. *Italics his*.

"But the life of a flower", as Federica said, "is as brief as those five days of anarchy."¹ The Government swiftly applied the Law of Defense. Syndicates were closed, arrests made. Only in Barcelona was the repression very severe, however. In the Alto Llobregat, the government forces were in charge of Commander Humberto Gil Cabrera, who was not unsympathetic to the CNT.² But from Barcelona, on February 10, sailed the prison ship Buenos Aires, for Africa with over one hundred (the accounts vary) CNT and FAI leaders. The governor of Villa Cisneros refused to take charge of Durruti and he, with several other anarchists, was sent back to Fuerteventura.³ A number of them, including Durruti, were released the following autumn.⁴

The miscarriage of this attempt at social revolution caused very sharp criticism of the National Committee of the CNT and the Catalan Regional Committee. It is true that not until the insurrection had been suppressed in Cardona and the

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1. Federica Montseny, "Hacia una nueva aurora social", Revista Blanca X, No. 210 (February 15, 1932), 556.
 2. G. Gilabert, Un Heroe del Pueblo: Durruti (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nervio, 1936?), pp. 21-22.
 3. It seems that this governor, Regueral by name, was the son of a former governor of Bilbao who had instituted a particularly severe repression of the workers there. The elder Regueral was later assassinated in the streets of León, Durruti's home town, and the son insisted that Durruti and company were responsible. Hence Regueral's refusal to admit Durruti to territory under his jurisdiction. Ricardo Sanz, Figuras de la Revolución Española: Buenaventura Durruti (Toulouse: Ediciones "El Frente", 1945), p. 5.
 4. According to Mr. A.M. Lehning, these deportations and the Casas Viejas episode were the most important facts in the general propaganda campaign against Azana and so are illustrative of the power and importance of the CNT at this time. The Government was forced to return the deportees under threat of the assassination of some ministers. In an interview with the writer, March 15, 1953, Amsterdam.

Alto Llobregat did the CNT give an order for a general strike in Catalonia, which also failed. But Juan López complained that "neither the Regional Committee of Catalonia nor the Comarcal Committee of the Alto Llobregat had had news of the plan of the miners to revolt."¹

López was probably right:

[The preparation of the rising] was the work of isolated localities, without any general plan, without keeping any formal promise by an organization, bearing all the marks of a disconnected, sporadic movement, provoked by the vehemence of comrades who did not know how to control their impatience....²

But this does not mean that Catalan faista Arturo Parera was telling the truth when he said, nearly six months later, that "the F.A.I. did not take part in the Alto Llobregat movement."³ Parera himself, with Vicente Pérez (Combina) and Durruti had even gone to Figols to talk with the miners.

...Durruti told the miners that the bourgeois democracy had failed; that it was necessary to make the revolution; that the complete emancipation of the working class could only be achieved by expropriating the social wealth of the bourgeoisie and suppressing the State. He advised the Figols miners to prepare for the final struggle and he showed them how to make bombs with tin cans and dynamite.⁴

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1. López, op. cit., p. 19.
 2. Comite Nacional, Informe de la Delegación de la C.N.T. al Congreso Extraordinario de la A.I.T. y Resoluciones del mismo (Barcelona: Sección de Información, Propaganda y Prensa C.N.T., 1937), p. 59.
 3. "Crónica Asturiana", El Luchador, No. 75 (June 10, 1932), 3.
 4. Gilabert, Un Heroe del Pueblo..., p. 21.

Nonetheless, the failure of the Llobregat rising was the symbol of the split between CNT moderates and extremists throughout the spring of 1932.

I accuse! [said Federica Montseny] . I accuse, yes! I accuse those who are to blame for this iniquity [the deportations]And I am going to accuse not only the Government of the Republic....

...I ACCUSE: In the first place, the thirty signers of the famous Manifesto....Of the moderates there is not one in jail....

In the second place, those who, in private conversations with Menéndez, with Aiguadé, with Companys, with Lluhi y Vallesca and with Macià, duly held forth on the past, the character, activity, the influence and the ominous actions of some of those who are now bound for Bata.

I accuse those who in these recent days, when there were ten pueblos in the Catalan mountains under arms for the social revolution; when throughout almost all Spain people were waiting for just one sign to throw themselves into a united movement; when the C.N.T. saw before itself a possibility of realizing its ideal, once again betrayed the movement.

Ah! señor Menéndez and señor Moles and señor Macià: would you be able to tell us what enchufe, what sinecure, what nice job you have promised to Emilio Mira, secretary of the Regional Committee of the Confederation of Labor of Catalonia, for his admirable work of silencing the enemy's guns from his secretariat, for his barbarous deeds directed toward delaying any agreement for lending solidarity to the rebels in the Alto Llobregat; for his attitude of opposition to every solidarity strike and for everything he did to prevent the strike agreement, taken in principle and put into practice on Saturday in Barcelona, from being extended to all of Catalonia?

This should certainly be worth a monthly salary of at least five hundred pesetas...!

Could you tell us, señor Menéndez, señor Moles and señor Macià, what Deputation, Ministry or civil Government you have promised to Angel Pestana, secretary of the National Committee of the

Confederation of Labor, for having ably sabotaged the strike agreement...for gaining time, before taking any agreement against the rising in the Alto Llobregat; afterwards, squandering it in such a way that the solidarity strike would be late and impossible, so that those in Figols would already be defeated and in Barcelona and the rest of Spain, the people, disoriented, undecided, would return to work? Oh, this is really worth more than a thousand pesetas a month, since it's a first-rate faena! Senor Azana has made bullfighting terms the order of the day! ¹

García Oliver (who was also on the National Committee) charged that Pestaña had privately sent a circular, with the National Committee seal on it, to each regional organization, saying that all the other regionals favored, instead of a general strike, a propaganda campaign in protest against the deportations. Two hundred CNT-FAI prisoners in the Model Jail in Barcelona demanded Pestaña's resignation if the allegation were true.² Not only had he not supported the January movement, but once it was lost, Pestaña would not even advocate drastic action on behalf of the arrested and deported of the CNT.³ It was a strong accusation. Not long after it, Pestaña was replaced as Secretary of the National Committee by faísta Manuel Rivas. In early December Pestaña was expelled from his union, the metallurgy syndicate of

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1. "¡Yo Acuso!", El Luchador, No. 59 (February 19, 1932), 1. Italics hers.
 2. "Por los fueros de la verdad", ibid., No. 64 (March 25, 1932), 1-2.
 3. Emilio Mira was so much opposed to the January general strike in Catalonia that he threatened to resign as Secretary of the Catalan Regional Committee. The strike was attempted but Mira was not replaced until the Regional Plenum of April in Sabadell. "Historia y liquidación de una campaña", El Luchador, No. 65 (April 1, 1932), 2.

Barcelona. Even his own section voted against him.¹

General strikes in protest against the deportations swept along the Mediterranean coast and touched some inland towns and cities. In Tarrasa, for example, near Barcelona, anarchist groups met on February 14 and decided to strike. On the night of the fifteenth, armed with pistols, shotguns and grenades, they took the strategic points of the city. One group laid siege to the Civil Guards barracks while another seized the municipal building and ran up the red and black flag. On the morning of the sixteenth guards from Sabadell arrived and the rebels surrendered, to be carried off to prison.

These arrests, the strike failures, the deportations -- all stemming from the catastrophic attempt of the FAI in January in the Llobregat Valley -- served only, in the early months of 1932, to drive the wedge more deeply between the two wings of the CNT.

B. The Confederation Splits

1. The Pleno Regional de Sabadell

An important Regional Plenum of Catalan syndicates was held in Sabadell in the last days of April, 1932. Over three hundred delegates representing some 250,000 members attended the sessions, which were marked by the bitter

1. For the report of the Junta of the Sindicato Unico de la Metalurgia, see "La expulsión de Angel Pestana", Boletín de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (Barcelona), II, No. 15 (March, 1933), pp. 17-19.

personalisms of the two tendencies. The attacks on Pestaña and Mira continued. With Felipe Aláiz in jail, the moderates sought to recover control of Solidaridad Obrera.¹ The FAI complained that the Pleno Nacional de Regionales of April 15 in Madrid had been a white-wash of the treintista betrayals of the Figols miners and the deportees. The plenum opened with the expulsion of the Local Federations of Lerida and Gerona (the Tarragona federation left in May), all of which were under the influence of Maurín's Bloque Obrero y Campesino.

When the Sabadell conference elected faísta Alejandro Gilabert new Regional Secretary, "it smelled of maneuver and disgusted many delegations of the Syndicates of the Regional, especially the ones from Sabadell."² The Sabadell syndicates alleged FAI dictatorship and announced that they would not pay dues to the CNT until the numerous syndicates which had

1. Aláiz reassumed the editorship in July. Said Juan Peiró:
 "Felipe Aláiz, antisindicalist by temperament and conviction, has never known nor does he know now what a syndicate is or what the mission of syndicalism is.... From now on, it will be hard for 'Solidaridad Obrera' to fool the Sindicato del Ramo de Vidrio de Mataró; moreover, if it depends on me, and it almost always has, 'Solidaridad Obrera' will not get one peseta more from this Syndicate than what is deducted from the confederal stamp...."
 "Hacia el hundimiento definitivo", Cultura Libertaria, No. 35 (July 15, 1932), 1.

Between September, 1931 when Peiró resigned, and November, 1932, the chief editorship of "Soli" changed hands seven times!

2. López, op. cit., p.20.

not paid up had done so.¹ Thereupon the entire Local Federation walked out of the conference, to be followed shortly after by the Badalona syndicates when Barcelona was named the seat of the new Regional Committee. The Communist Party contention that "every day the anarchist chiefs demonstrate more clearly that there is nothing that can distinguish the policy of the F.A.I. from that of the anarcho-reformists" seemed somehow wide of the mark.²

2. Expulsions and Walkouts

The split within the CNT did not augur well for the propaganda campaign voted by the April Plenum of Regionals. CNT organizations had been declared illegal in Catalonia, Levante, Andalusia, Extremadura, Aragon, Rioja and Navarre. This plenum decided that protests were to be raised for the reopening of closed syndicates, return of the deported, the release of prisoners, freedom of press and association, and the abolition of the Law of Defense of the Republic. May 29 was to be the big day for demonstrations, but the government suspended the meetings and cracked down still more harshly on the confederal press and leaders. El Luchador, for example, was suspended for three months in the summer of 1932.

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1. By CNT rules, syndicates were to cast votes in direct proportion to the number of confederal sallos they sold. When the syndicates ignored this rule, as the Barcelona syndicates in particular did, Barcelona alone could out-vote all other syndicates in Catalonia.
 2. Hacia la Unidad de Lucha de Clase: Plataforma de Accion de los Partidarios de la Unidad Sindical, Adoptada en la Conferencia de Unidad Sindical celebrada en Madrid, del 30 de junio al 2 de julio de 1932 (Madrid: Ediciones Frente Unico, 1932), p. 24.

The expulsion of Juan López from the CNT by the National Committee in June (although López complained that only his syndicate, Construction of Barcelona, had such power), was one of the earliest in a series of expulsions of moderates during the last half of 1932. López had written a violent article in Cultura Libertaria attacking García Oliver and Federica Montseny. During the summer of 1932 this newspaper consistently forwarded its syndicalist interpretation of the Spanish revolution, criticizing the FAI. But it did not (normally) reach the same pitch of acrid accusation and violent name-calling which characterized the anarchist press. Indeed, Manuel Salgado, in commenting on the split, said that

...Not only was there a difference of ideas at the root of it; there was also a strong dose, perhaps too much, of personalisms. This is partially shown by the fact that we did not have this dispute in Madrid in spite of there being really thousands of members there at that time, and in spite of the fact that some of the "treintistas" came from Madrid. That campaign degenerated into something which it is disgusting even to remember....¹

On September 24 the Catalan Regional Committee expelled the Local Federation of Syndicates of Sabadell, with some 20,000 members.² These syndicates, again protesting the tutelage of the FAI, still refused to turn in their confederal dues to the national organization. The Sabadell organization

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1. In a letter to Mr. Gerald Brenan, June 29, 1943, London.
 2. Memoria del Pleno Regional de Sindicatos Unicos de Cataluña Celebrado en Barcelona del 5 al 13 de Marzo de 1933 (Barcelona: Talleres Gráficos Alfa, 1933), pp.64-65.

was strongly under the influence of treintismo. Indeed, according to Schapiro, the treintistas were trying to use the Sabadell local federation as a lever to force out the Regional Committee and recover the leadership of the CNT.¹ The Regional Committee established a rival organization in Sabadell, which was not successful and only increased the mutual hostility.

Shortly after, the fight spread to Levante, where the extremists walked out of a Regional Congress at Alcoy. The split became serious at a Regional Plenum in Valencia in October. The moderates complained about the failure to use the proportional vote and attacked a series of strikes which were "determined by Draconian orders and which could have no effectiveness on account of their defect of origin."² "Defect of origin" was a polite term for the FAI. The syndicalists were particularly disturbed by FAI attempts to obtain seats, for the first time, on the regional comité propresos. The significance of these efforts was that they epitomized the continuing pressure of the FAI to maintain the trabazón:

...Some time after the anarchist, as well as the syndical organization agreed to create a Comité Pro Presos in common, with a national character... someone tried to view this as a danger for the syndical organization....Should the F.A.I. participate with the C.N.T. in a common organism on behalf of prisoners?....We think that those who veto it do very badly because the organization and particularly the victims of repression would gain a great deal by

1. Op. cit., p. 34.

2. "La Sesión Histórica de Ayer Tarde", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 1267 (May 6, 1936), 2.

it; moreover, there is not the slightest danger in it to anyone as far as interference is concerned...¹

The best FAI case for the trabazón was that many of the prisoners were faístas: the first in the streets and thus the most likely to suffer arrest. But the FAI contention that there was no danger in the trabazón of interference in the CNT was not true. "The Durruti, García Oliver, Ascaso team is mistress of the Confederation...", said the Mochs in 1932,² and not at all above imposing their "ascetic puritanism" on the syndicalist heretics. Although the 1928 trabazón agreement had applied only to a national committee for prisoners, the faístas were able to win control of a number of regional comités pro presos as well.³ But in Levante this attempt stirred serious resistance.

In an effort to settle this dispute, the National Committee of the CNT sent a group of three mediators to Valencia. Marcos Alcoón of the Committee, and, from the Secretariat of the Syndicalist International, Eusebio C. Carbó and the Russian anarchist Alexander Schapiro, composed the delegation. They obtained a compromise solution in Valencia. But it was

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1. "Aportaciones para una Pleno o Conferencia Peninsular de la F.A.I.", El Libertario (Madrid), No.35 (July 23, 1932), 1.
 2. Op. cit., p. 314.
 3. The FAI was also successful in keeping positions on (and controlling) the joint comités de defensa. These committees were the successors of the comités de acción voted in 1928; they served to organize risings. Strangely enough, the trabazón on these committees was not attacked, as it was on the comités pro presos.

ruptured at a pleno in early March when the trabazón was imposed on the Levantine Comité Pro Presos by the CNT National Committee itself.¹

The FAI promised to tell "the truth about the 'bomberos treintistas'"²; There was talk of "the syndicalist republican fascism in Sabadell."³ El Luchador darkly asserted that the treintista leaders seemed to hold confederal posts in perpetuity. But,

There will be no peace in the Confederation, not while Urales can hold a pen in his hand, not while there are leaders who live and want to live off it and while there is individual conscience. Look at these people who mock the principles and tactics of the C.N. of T. Over Huelva there's a name. Over La Coruña there's a name. Over Alcoy there's a name. Over Sabadell there's a name. Look at their moral state. They are workers who fled the workshop and, in order not to go back to it, they live off the quotas of the workers and aspire to public offices, perverting the ideas and tactics of the C.N. of T.⁴

We must now return to the mainstream of events in Catalonia. In January, 1933, after the unsuccessful anarchist

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1. "El Pleno de Comarcales y F. Locales celebrado el 3 de Marzo", El Combate Sindicalista (Valencia), No. 3 (March 11, 1933), 1, and "La Asamblea del domingo en la Plaza de Toros", ibid., No. 6 (April 1, 1933), 4.
 2. "A los anarquistas y a todos los hombres que sienten la inquietud de la hora en que vivimos", El Libertario, No. 51 (November 12, 1932), 4.
 3. 'Han de Islanda' in El Luchador, No. 83 (November 4, 1932), 1.
 4. "Las luchas que 'El Luchador' libra en Galicia", ibid., No. 84 (November 11, 1932), pp. 5-6.

rising of that month,¹ forty-four Catalan syndicates, largely from Sabadell, Manresa, Valls and Mataró, signed the following list of demands:

First: Convoking of an extraordinary regional Plenum...for February 26....

Second: At this Plenum the resignation of the regional Committee and its Secretariat will be made effective, and a new Committee and Secretariat will be named, whose residence will not be in Barcelona.

Third: Resignation of the National Committee.

Fourth: Resignation of the editor and staff of "Solidaridad Obrera" and naming of a new editor.

Fifth: Proclamation of the most total, complete and absolute independence of the National Confederation of Labor with relation to any organization of a party type whatsoever, or of any other kind, and of the fact that its organisms--Comités pro presos and others--are to be exclusively composed of direct delegates of the syndicates.

Sixth: Naming of a commission to investigate the administrative work of the regional Committee.²

At the same time that the treintistas put forth such unlikely petitions, they called for members for their newly established Federación Sindicalista Libertaria, "the F.A.I. of the Opposition".³

The principles and goals of this Federation were those of working for the same ones which the C.N.T. had postulated throughout its history, trying to group the militants in order to make them able, and to get them, to exercise as much influence as possible within the Syndicates in

1. See below, pp. 144-53.

2. "Por los fueros de la independencia sindical", Sindicalismo, No. 1 (February 14, 1933), 1. This newspaper, the organ of the Federación Sindicalista Libertaria was edited by Juan López, succeeded Cultura Libertaria upon the death of its editor, Agustín Gibanel.

3. "Sexto día del Congreso Nacional de la C.N.T." Solidaridad Obrera, May 7, 1936, No. 1268, p. 2.

the activity...of the Organization.¹

At the Catalan Regional Plenum in the Meridiana Theater in Barcelona in March,² the Sabadell syndicates found themselves confronted with an ultimatum:

1. The Ponencia recommends that the Sabadell delegation explicitly recognize its indiscipline....

1. López, op. cit., p. 20. See below p. .
2. According to the report, dated December 1, 1932, which the Regional Committee made to this Plenum, "the Catalan Regional is composed of twenty-five Comarcals and three Provinces federated among themselves, with 278 Syndicates, which have over 300,000 members, approximately, including the unemployed controlled by the organization. "Memoria del Pleno Regional...de Cataluña...de Marzo de 1933, op. cit., p. 28.

Syndicalist Ricard Fornells did not agree with this estimate. He gave the following figures to show the declining strength of the Catalan Regional: at the plenos of August, 1931, 322,000 members represented, and October, 1931, 305,000; at the April and May, 1932, plenos of Lerida and Sabadell, 230,000; and for the March, 1933, pleno, 200,000. Even this last figure, said Fornells, is an exaggerated one, if one looks at the paid membership figures and the regular sales of Solidaridad Obrera. "Pocos y buenos, no. Todos", El Combate Sindicalista, No. 6 (April 1, 1933), 1.

Mr. Brennan writes that the 1931-1932 period was one of anarcho-syndicalist expansion. Op. cit., p. 243. This is perhaps true for 1931 and in the campo for 1932. But for Catalonia, the view of the Mochs that 1932 was a year of decline for the CNT seems more accurate. They give the following reasons for the decrease in CNT strength:

1. The capture of the CNT by the FAI.
2. The discouragement of the workers by the split.
3. The belief that the CNT was abusing the general strike, producing only sterile agitation.

4. Republican sentiment among the workers.
5. With the passage of the Catalan Autonomy Statute (September, 1932), the CNT was deprived, in Barcelona, at least, of further profit from the Catalan-Castile feud. The Generalitat, that is to say, could afford to treat the anarcho-syndicalists with a firmer hand. Picard-Moch, op. cit., pp. 314-16.

2. That it also recognize that the resolution taken by the Regional Committee...of expulsion of the Sabadell Syndicates is justified by the attitude of indiscipline of these Syndicates in retaining the funds from the confederal stamp.

3. Considering the situation created in the locality between the Local Federation and the Syndicate of Various Trades, the Commission considers that once the Sabadell Syndicates have complied, in general assemblies, with the agreements of this Commission, the Syndicate of Various Trades will be dissolved....

4. Considering that with the entrance of the comrades of the Syndicate of Various Trades, the numerical composition of the Sabadell Syndicates will undergo a change, this Commission understands that once they are re-admitted, these Syndicates will hold general assemblies to ratify or rectify their respective Juntas.

5. This Commission understands that the maximum period for the Syndicates of Sabadell to give assent to this recommendation will be until April 15.

6. This Ponencia considers all the agreements of Plenums and Congresses untouchable and once more affirms its principles, tactics and libertarian communist goal.¹

The Sabadell syndicates not unnaturally refused what they considered to be a sanction against them. They particularly disliked paragraph four, which required the Juntas of their syndicates to resign and for new elections to be held. This provision was termed "antifederal and insulting."²

1. Memoria del Pleno Regional...de Catalunya...de Marzo de 1933, p. 187.

2. "Del pleno regional", Sindicalismo, No. 7 (March 31, 1933), 4.

...Whoever published the fourth point...knew full well that this was to drive the Sabadell syndicates out of the C.N.T....If it had really been desired to incorporate the syndicates of Sabadell, why were they put in the perilous position of having to refuse a solution because it impaired the dignity of the organization? Was not this to agree, covertly, to an expulsion?

...Now Sabadell has marked out its position. It does not accept the recommendation. But it considers itself rightfully within the C.N.T.... It admits neither expulsion nor does it want a split.¹

Nevertheless on April 15 the Catalan Regional Committee received a statement signed by Emilo Mira on behalf of the Local Federation of Sabadell. The document gave notice that all the syndicates of the locality rejected the decisions of the March plenum and intended to appeal to a national congress. Alejandro Gilabert, regional secretary at the time, took a note to Solidaridad Obrera, which, due to the suspension of "Soli", was never published. By it the Sabadell syndicates were definitively expelled from the CNT.

After Sabadell marched fifty other syndicates in Catalonia and many in Levante, where treintismo ruled in the most powerful unions, such as Metalurgia, Transporte and Madera of Valencia, and Textil y Fabril of Alcoy. Huelva

1. "Del pleno regional", Sindicalismo, No. 7 (March 31, 1933), 4.

left too, led by Juan López. Galicia and Asturias, where there was much sympathy for the moderates, held firm and did not leave the CNT.¹ But the Sindicatos de Oposición were born.

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1. Mr. Brennan, op. cit., p. 255, states that the Opposition Syndicates were in Catalonia, Valencia and "one in Asturias". There were no Sindicatos de Oposición in Asturias, as I have said. It was Huelva, rather, in Andalusia, which provided the dissident unions outside Catalonia and Levante. A complete list of the Opposition Syndicates may be found in "Los Sindicatos representados en el Segundo Congreso Nacional Extraordinario de la C.N.T.", Solidaridad Obrera, No. 1269 (May 8, 1936), 3.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANARCHIST RISING OF JANUARY 1933

While the CNT lurched its way through this internal wrangle, it stumbled into a second calamity: the rising of early January, 1933. We shall make a close analysis of how this attempt was produced for several reasons. It is a good lesson in how not to make a revolution. It is an excellent example of CNT-FAI policy under the Second Republic and an illustration of why the CNT split. The revolt, finally--and this is perhaps its most interesting aspect--affords a case study of relationships and tensions among various anarcho-syndicalist organs at a highly critical moment. In brief, the members of the FAI attempted to use a probable CNT railway strike to touch off a rising of their own.

The January movement originated in the agitation of CNT railway workers organized in the Federación Nacional de la Industrial Ferroviaria (FNIF):

The railwaymen (Natividad Adalia, Secretary of the National Committee of the FNIF, warned the Government:] have hunger salaries; over seventy thousand railway workers get salaries which vary from four, five and six pesetas. Others get even less. Was it--is it--asking too much for an increase of four pesetas?...The personnel are hungry; they are suffering misery. Unless satisfaction is given them, they will go on strike....Until the 20th of this month, the railway workers trust in the government and the enterprises, too; after this date, they will trust only in their own efforts.¹

¹ "La F.N.I.F. al Presidente del Gobierno", CNT (Madrid), No.25 (December 12, 1932), 4.

Of the ninety delegates who attended the FNIF National Congress in Madrid in the first week of December, eighty-nine voted to go on strike if their demands were not met.¹

The UGT Sociedad Nacional Ferroviaria, to which the majority of the rail workers belonged, and Indalecio Prieto, Minister of Public Works, who refused the FNIF claims in a speech in the Cortes on December 15, were subjected to constant attack by the CNT in November and December. All signs pointed to serious trouble on the railroads. But the great general rail strike never happened.

On the day after the FNIF Congress, a commission from the CNT Pleno de Regionales then meeting in Madrid promised the FNIF National Committee that the rest of the CNT would support the general rail strike. The CNT did not have the six thousand pesetas sought by the FNIF for strike preparation. But the confederal National Committee instructed the Comité Nacional de Defensa to make the necessary preparations for the strikers. The Defense Committee was to get arms, organize resistance groups in workers' quarters, and wait for orders from the National CNT Committee, of which it was, theoretically, only an instrument.

The CNT National Committee waited for the FNIF to announce the strike or at least to advise the Committee on the state of readiness along the railroads. "Dear comrades", wrote the Secretary of the CNT National Committee,

1 See "La F.N.I.F. presenta las bases de rei vindicaciones" CNT, No.26 (December 13, 1932), 4, for the text of these claims.

Manuel Rivas, to his FNIF counterpart, "it is urgent for us to know the intentions of the railworkers, confronted with the imminent strike situation...."¹

Rivas had no answer. On the fifteenth:

Esteemed comrades....The C.N.T. will do everything it can for this conflict since we will not haggle about solidarity with our rail comrades, but we need to be informed about what is going on....

Still no answer. On the twentieth:

"¡Salud!...We do not know the reason for your delay but your silence disquiets us...."

On the twenty-first:

This makes four letters we have written to you and they have still not been answered...

We must remind you that the Congress of Railway Workers in their entirety supported going on general strike....As far as we are concerned, you can present (the ten-day notice of strike required by law) tomorrow if you want to, but we beg you to send it to us to announce urgently.

On the twenty-third, Adalia finally replied to the CNT. We shall let you know definitely on the twenty-fifth, he said, if the entire railway organization will strike. The confederal National Committee grew more angry and warned Adalia that the FNIF Congress had already decided to strike, and that the CNT was prepared. "What are you waiting for, then?"

1 The discussion of the December-January movement is primarily based on two documents. All quotations, unless otherwise cited, are taken from "Actas del Pleno de Regionales celebrado los días 30 y 31 de enero y 1 y 2 de febrero", Boletín de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, II, No.15 (March, 1933), 4-17. The second source is Schapiro, op.cit., pp.5-23.

But the FNIF was still polling its regional organizations on the question. Thirty-six sub-sections said they were not ready to strike; thirty-five said yes, and the FNIF National Committee was tied. Some of the delegates who voted for the strike at the Congress refused to support it afterwards. A subsequent plenum of sub-sectional delegates tied as well but finally agreed to give strike notice on January 9. The FAI rising, which we shall describe shortly, broke out in Barcelona on the eighth; no rail strike notice was ever given.

The constant insistence of the CNT on the FNIF, proclaiming the strike was strange policy at this time. The great majority of railway employees were UGT members and therefore less inclined to be revolutionary than the anarchists. There was little chance that they would join the strike. The Government, moreover, had already ordered some minor concessions to the railworkers, and this was calculated to moderate revolutionary sentiment. The CNT might have judged by the extremely reluctant attitude of the FNIF that the railroad laborers were not exactly chafing at the bit of revolution.

That the railworkers should not have agreed in Congress to strike and then have backed down was a legitimate criticism. But, in the assigning of responsibility, the National Committee of the CNT was no less at fault. For it allowed the direction of events to slip from its hands into those of

the Comités de Defensa, which were controlled by the FAI.

While the revolutionary balloon of the railway people gradually deflated, the National Defense Committee and the Catalan Regional Defense Committee were feverishly storing arms and preparing their Cuadros de Defensa for The Day. These so-called Cuadros de Defensa, "a type of grupo de choque", were the operative arms of the Regional and National Comités de Defensa. The cuadros, clandestine of course, were composed of "elementos de acción" and were organized on a local basis.

Led by García Oliver, these cuadros were the factor which determined the January movement.¹ They were largely responsible for the pressure on the rail workers to strike and for igniting the general revolutionary rising of January 8. The responsibility for the lack of coordination of the revolt lay primarily with the cuadros.

It had in fact been García Oliver's idea to take advantage of the national rail strike to set off the revolution. "Comrades Ascaso, Durruti, Aurelio Fernández, Ricardo Sanz, Dionisio Eroles, (Gregorio) Jover and other leading figures gave their agreement to García Oliver's plan".²

These men grew more and more impatient as the day for presenting the strike notice passed by without event. When

1 José Peirats, in an interview with the writer, Toulouse, September 11, 1952.

2. Gilabert, Un Heroe del Pueblo..., op.cit., p.23.

an explosion in Clot, a quarter of Barcelona, led police to a bomb deposit, the anarchists felt "it was necessary to begin the revolt before all the supplies (they) had fell into the hands of the authorities...."¹

The National Committee of Defense, realizing that it would be discovered as had already happened elsewhere (Clot), went to the C.N. of the C.N.T. to ask what had been intended for the projected conflict and were told that the strike notices would not be announced, due to a decision of the C.N. of the I.F.; they appeared angry with that answer.

At an extraordinary meeting of the National Committee on January 7, the National Defense Committee warned that the Comité de Defensa Regional de Cataluña was insisting that the movement must be launched at all costs. But the National Committee of the CNT, with some misgivings, had just accepted an FNIF promise to give strike notice on January 9. The Committee, therefore, urged the Catalan Defense Committee to take no action. But the Catalans were eager; the Regional Committee of Defense notified the CNT Secretary that on Sunday, January 8, at 8 p.m., the revolution would be unleashed.²

Manuel Rivas was not only secretary of the National Committee of the CNT. He was also Secretary of the National Committee of Defense! He was torn two ways: opposed to the haste of the Regional Committee, but at heart with his friends. He too, after all, was a faista. Rivas mistakenly assumed

1 Gilabert, Un Héroe del Pueblo..., p. 23.

2 Schapiro, op.cit., pp.9-0.

that the decision of the Regional Defense Committee had been taken in full accord with the confederal regional organization, for the Defense Committee could take no executive action on its own. He was wrong; this is just what the Defense Committee had done.

Rivas based his next step on a CNT National Committee circular of December 29, 1932,¹ which had advised all regional organizations that where one Regional rises, the rest must follow along. In his capacity as Secretary of the National Committee of Defense, Rivas wired all the Regionals that Catalonia had risen. The wire was signed only with his name and Rivas was known as the Secretary of the Comité Nacional of the CNT rather than of Defense. In Levante and Andalusia, the Regional organizations instructed their syndicates to rise. These Regionals naturally, but mistakenly, believed that support for Catalonia had been ordered by the National Confederation of Labor.² Once again, as in 1930,³ the CNT was pulled into a revolutionary venture by the actions of the Iberian Anarchist Federation. But this time, one must add, the initiatives of the FAI were compounded by a remarkable admixture of misunderstanding and chance.

The Valencian syndicalist leader, Domingo Torres, was

1 Schapiro, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

2 Ibid., pp. 9-10.

3. See above, pp. 30-31.

disgusted:

From now on, when they want a general strike, they will have to play their cards face up.... I want everyone who plays at revolutions to know that when they treat us like common soldiers and order us to "strikes" and "revolutions", we will demand a conclusive reckoning. Otherwise, they can go fry asparagus.¹

"On January 8, 1933, the grupos de acción and the confederal Cuadros de Defensa began the assault on the barracks."² The police were not unprepared for the insurrection, especially in Barcelona. There were arrests, shootings, severe beatings of prisoners,³ including Juan García Oliver, closing of CNT syndicates, discoveries of arms supplies by the police and fines for Solidaridad Obrera. Nearly all the members of the Peninsular Committee of the FAI were arrested, as was Manuel Rivas.⁴

Elsewhere in Catalonia there were risings, and in Ripolllet the Ayuntamiento was seized and the day of brotherhood announced. Before the arrival of troops,

...the red and black flag was hoisted. The real estate archives were burned in the public square in front of groups of curious onlookers. An edict or proclamation was made public, declaring money, private property and the exploitation of man by man abolished.⁵

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- 1 "La verdad sobre la última huelga general", Sindicalismo, No.1 (February 14, 3, 1933).
 - 2 Gilabert, Un Heroe del Pueblo..., p.23.
 - 3 Federico Urales (editor), La Barbarie Gubernamental: España 1933, (Barcelona: Ediciones de "El Luchador", 1933).
 - 4 Immediately, by agreement of the Federación de Grupos Anarquistas de Cataluña, a new Committee was formed.
 - 5 Peirats, op.cit., p.54.

In the cities of Valencia and Lerida and the towns of Pedralba, Bugarra, Ribarroja, Tavernes de Valldigna in the region of Valencia, there was a similar pattern of revolt and repression. The tragic story of Casas Viejas in Andalusia has been well told.¹

In short, the anarchist rising of January, 1933, was a calamitous failure. But the CNT made frantic haste to deny any part of the movement. "Esa no es nuestra revolución" said CNT.² You will not make the Confederation responsible, said the National Committee:

(We] entirely refuse the arbitrary judgement emitted by men of the bourgeois Republic and by the politicians of all shades, since these events have been of purely anarchist significance without the confederal organism having any part in them....³

This was hedging, but edging toward the truth. Manuel Buenacasa, no treintista certainly, was more blunt, and more accurate: "El faísmo and not anarchism, provoked the happenings of last January 8 in Barcelona...."⁴ And the FAI even claimed the movement as its own:

1 See Brenan, op.cit., pp.247-48, and Ramón J. Sender, Casas Viejas (Madrid; Editorial Cenit, 1933). The official CNT version may be found in La Verdad Sobre la Tragedia de Casas Viejas (Barcelona: Ediciones C.N.T., 1933).

2 No.49 (January 9, 1933), 1.

3 "La Confederación Nacional del Trabajo fija su posición, haciendo oír su voz", Solidaridad Obrera, No.607 (January 12, 1933), 1.

4 La C.N.T., Los "Treinta" y la F.A.L., op.cit., p.79

We want the entire responsibility for ourselves because we did not ask for the collaboration of anyone or the support of the working-people or of the C.N.T. itself. Nor did we warn even our best friends of what we were intending to do. And this is the way we shall continue in the future: to assume, alone and exclusively, the responsibility which may come from the attitude of frank rebellion which we have adopted.

We know the tactics of the enemy from experience and therefore we have preferred not to call on the organized workers to second the protest and support it. We are strong enough to work on our own account and assume all the responsibility. If there are elements who voluntarily want to go along with us, they are welcome. But let it be on the record: that it is we the anarchists organized in the Iberian Anarchist Federation who are supporting the struggle against the abuses of the State and we shall continue to do so....¹

Juan Peiro's judgement was different:

The facts have shown...that the old theory of the action of audacious minorities...the boastful theory...has a very relative not to say absolutely worthless value.²

Certainly the faistas had made a game of revolution; when the railway workers tried to deny it to them, they grew petulant. The individual heroic act and the grandeur of the goal were all the FAI saw. How many bombs do we have? was the operative question. The goal:

..The F.A.I. saw in the increase of liberty given them by the Republic a convenient weakening in the power of the Government which would enable them, at some not very distant date, to bring it down. Their tactics of armed putsches, acts of sabotage and guerilla warfare with the police were intended both to make the work of the Government as difficult as possible and to rouse the whole of the working classes to the necessity for revolution.³

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- 1 "Federación Anarquista Ibérica al Pueblo", CNT, No.78 (February 11, 1933), p.4.
 - 2 "Una tragedia más", Cultura Libertaria, No.62 (January 19, 1933), 1.
 - 3 Brenan, op.cit., p.257.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CNT IN 1933

We have seen that from the winter of 1931-32 to that of 1932-33, the National Confederation of Labor suffered three jolting blows: the failure of two risings and the definitive split of the organization. After the January revolt and the Sabadell Plenum of March, the major developments in the anarcho-syndicalist movement to the end of 1933 were five in number: more strikes, an intensive amnesty campaign, the emergence of an organized syndical opposition, a no votad drive before the November elections and a third frustrated attempt at social revolution in December.

A. Strikes

Although the Pleno de Regionales of Madrid in late January and early February was largely devoted to a post-mortem on what the treintistas might have called "the late wicked rebellion", the plenum also decided on a national general strike. The strike was to come after a three to four week campaign and would be for the usual objectives: liberty for prisoners, repeal of compulsory arbitration legislation, opening of outlawed syndicates and press freedom. The CNT and FAI press whipped up the idea of a strike and increased the intensity of attacks on Azana and his Government:

The dictatorship of this Spain condemned to suffer the impositions of the most ferocious despots, is not a dictatorship of one Party, or of several; it is that of a single man, of a monster in human form! He is the dictator of the people and of the State itself, whose members are the idiotic automatons of his all-embracing will. He is Manuel Azaña...distant disciple of Machiavelli, enthusiastic imitator of Carmona, of Machado, of Mussolini, and under his boots are the 25 million humans who populate this wretched country.¹

Yet the National Committee of the CNT found more evidence of reluctance than of enthusiasm among the regional organizations for a national general strike in February or March.² Not until May was the attempt made.

In Catalonia, though, strikes began to blossom with the coming of spring. On April 13 potash miners in Cardona, one hundred and forty of them, stayed down in the mines without food or drink in protest against the dismissal of a comrade. They were soon seconded by miners in Figols, Sallent and Suria.

On April 17 over 35,000 building workers in Barcelona struck for a six hour day in order to create more employment in the trade. Nearly eighty per cent of the construction workers were unemployed, and a six hour day, the CNT contended, would cut this figure by a quarter.

A few days later work stopped at the Barcelona coal docks. The CNT charged that a July, 1931, contract negotiated without intervention of the Comité Paritario³ had been violated.

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1. Alfonso Nieves Núñez, "La España proletaria", Tierra y Libertad, No.106 (March 10, 1933), 1.
 2. See "Comunicaciones a las Regionales: Cartas Circulares del número 25 al 30", Boletín de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, II, No.15 (March, 1933), pp.20-24.
 3. 'The Government', said Jacinto Toranzo, had been sent to the W.C. "Tempestad en el Puerto", Solidaridad Obrera, No.685 (April 21, 1933), 6.

When the construction strike began, Solidaridad Obrera was suspended and a number of syndicates and ateneos libertarios were closed. The National Committee called for a forty-eight hour strike. On April 24 the Barcelona Ramo del Transporte declared a strike of all sections, in solidarity with the port workers. Taxis, buses, trams, metros--all stopped. More syndicates were shut down. Two days later CNT unions in all ramos in Barcelona struck. For a short time Barcelona was a dead city. Over 2,000 arrests were made, including important members of the Local, Regional and National Committees of the CNT and some of the editors of Tierra y Libertad and "Sol". After the end of the strike of April 24, the port and building strikes continued and El Combate Sindicalista accused the FAI of weakening the CNT in Barcelona by maintaining them.¹

The forty-eight hour national strike called by the Comité Nacional for May 9 and 10 brought only an intensification of the repression of CNT militants and publications. The strikers lacked the vital support of the railway workers, most of whom were in the UGT. The Galician Regional had been opposed to the movement and in Asturias, where the main strength of the CNT was concentrated in Gijón and La Felguera, exhausting strikes had been in progress for several months. The Regional of the Centro, where the UGT predominated, was in no position to do battle on so large a scale. Catalonia and Andalusia, followed by Levante and Aragon, were the centers of confederal strength. But for this very reason these

1. No.10 (April 29, 1933), 4.

regionals frequently had their syndicates closed and leading militants jailed. Moreover, unemployment bit harshly into the will to resist in these four areas. In Valencia alone, for example, there were over 8,000 on paro forzoso.¹

Add to all this [said Solano Palacio, of Asturias] the treason of the ugetistas and the slanders of the Bolsheviks, as well as the systematic persecution of the Government, and we shall have an idea of the insuperable difficulties with which the organization is struggling.²

One might well have asked the newspaper which published Palacio's autopsy just what was the point of a national strike in these grim circumstances? The treintistas in fact did:

...If it was made for the purpose of liberating comrades in prison, it has been shown that, instead of obtaining their liberty, the number of arrested has considerably increased, which is only natural when people go to a movement with scarcely any possibility of victory. If it was on account of the closing of syndicates, we observe that instead of opening those that were closed, all or nearly all are shut down.

Elsewhere, our national press organ has been indefinitely suspended. We must, then, recognize that not only has the organization not benefited but that, on the contrary, it has been enormously damaged.³

Juan Peiró called the May general strike "the most formidable and shameful defeat suffered by the C.N.T."⁴ It was the result, he said, of the dictatorship of the FAI and the

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1. "Sindicato de la Madera: Contestando a dos manifiestos de la U.G.T.", El Combate Sindicalista, No.13 (May 20, 1933), 2.
 2. "Volviendo por la Verdad", El Luchador, No.114 (June 9, 1933), 2.
 3. Juan Miranda, "El Fracaso del Falasmo: Reaccionemos el desastre", Sindicalismo, No.14 (May 19, 1933), 1.
 4. "El 'treintismo' y la escisión", ibid., No.31 (September 15, 1933), 4.

culmination of its "persistence in leading the C.N.T. from catastrophe to catastrophe".¹ It was this strike "which finished off the patience of those who were already full of the revolutionary (?) adventures which have dishonored the C.N.T."²

Nonetheless the opposition syndicates in Valencia struck, too. But there were complaints that the only reason the Comité Nacional had ordered the strike was to afford a pretext for calling off the National Congress scheduled for May, where "the lamentable state of the Organization" would have come to light.³

The building and dock strikes in Barcelona were underscored when the National Plenum of mid-June in Madrid reaffirmed the CNT detestation of the Jurados Mixtos.⁴ Yet the following month Largo Caballero tried to circumvent the anarcho-syndicalists by presenting some bases for the settlement of the strike. They were refused by the building workers not only in principle but also because they involved pay increases rather than a solution to the unemployment which had motivated the strike.

In early August a national assembly of construction

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1. "La triste realidad que nadie supo evitar", Sindicalismo, No.19 (June 23, 1933), 1.
 2. "El 'treintismo' y la escisión", loc.cit.
 3. Cesareo Caminos, "Cajón de sastre", El Combate Sindicalista No.14 (May 27, 1933), 3.
 4. "El Pleno Nacional de la C.N.T. al País y al Gobierno", CNT, No.169 (June 17, 1933), 1.

syndicates in Madrid threatened a nation-wide building strike if the Barcelona conflict were not satisfactorily settled. But on August 15, four months after the Barcelona strike had begun, employers and CNT representatives signed a new labor contract. It brought the workers only trifling gains and no genuine solution of the very real unemployment problem.¹

Sindicalismo wrote the strike off tersely:

The conflict of the Construction Branch is considered over, and "Sindicalismo" which said not half a word during its development, will now give its opinion.... It is impossible to contemplate in silence these disasters which, because of the noted stupidity of their orientation, fall on the working class like molten lead....²

B. Amnesty and Abstention

Concurrent with the strikes and, indeed, one of the reasons for them was the CNT campaign for the release of anarcho-syndicalist prisoners. By the middle of the summer the number of CNT-FAI members in jail was some 9,000.

In early April Durruti and Francisco Ascaso were arrested in Seville and spent most of the summer in jail, a symbol, together with other prominent anarchist figures there, of the martyrdom of CNT militants during 1933. One third of those in prison were in Andalusia and Extremadura.

The pressure for the granting of an amnesty was stepped up in late June and early July with the call by the Comité

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1. "La Huelga Ha Sido Solucionado", Solidaridad Obrera, No.745 (August 16, 1933), 1.
 2. "Liquidación de un Conflicto", No.28 (August 25, 1933), 3.

Nacional Pro Presos for a week of intense agitation.

Spotched diagonally across the columns of CNT were red letters three inches high pleading, "AMNESTY! AMNESTY!" In towns and cities throughout Spain rallies were held in July and August to clamor for the freedom of prisoners. Not amnesty, though, but more arrests (including that of Sr. Salgado) resulted on July 24, when the Government nervously alleged a plot between anarchists and Spanish rightists! In September 60,000 CNT members flowed into the Monumental bull ring in Barcelona to protest against the governmental repression.

In the first half of October a new emphasis was joined to confederal propaganda: abstention from the forthcoming elections of November.¹ All summer rightist groups had been increasing in strength in Spain. And the left republicans were still further imperiled when the socialists turned their backs on Azana and appealed to the workers of the CNT for electoral support to stave off fascism.

A Pleno de Regionales of the CNT in Madrid in late October and early November fixed the confederal position on the coming electoral campaign:

No one should vote and we advise the Spanish proletariat the greatest abstention in the elections.

Our organization must intensify the amnesty and anti-electoral campaigns.²

1. For a general discussion of the election campaign and election results, see Brenan, op. cit., pp. 265-67.

2. "El Pleno de Regionales de la C.N.T.: Nuestra posición ante las elecciones y ante múltiples problemas", CNT, (November 3, 1933), 3.

The high point of the abstention campaign came on November 5, when 75,000 workers attended a meeting in the Barcelona bull ring. "'Frente a las urnas, la revolución social!'" was the cry. "Workers", shouted Buenaventura Durruti, "you who voted yesterday without considering the consequences: if they had told you that the Republic was going to jail 9,000 laboring men, then would you have voted?"

"No!" came the mass response.¹

Valeriano Orobón Fernández, an influential young anarchist,² spoke and damned both right and left politicians. A republican revolution has failed, said Orobón, and a fascist revolution is at the door. The socialists and communists in Germany knew what Hitler was going to do, he added, but still they voted and signed their death sentences. Look at Austria, pride of the social democrats, said Orobón. There the socialists counted on forty-four per cent of the electorate and thought that fifty-one would be enough to give them power.

But they were ignorant of the fact that on the day after a triumph of this sort, they would have to go into the street to defend their electoral victory, because the forces of reaction would not tolerate having their positions snatched away.³

Arthur Müller Lehning, acting secretary of the Syndicalist International, commented from Spain in similar fashion:

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1. "La C.N.T. en la entraña del proletariado^{del} pueblo", Solidaridad Obrera, No.816 (November 7, 1933), 1.
 2. Orobón Fernández, then a secretary of the AIT, was one of the few leaders in the official CNT at this time who was not in the FAI. He was opposed to treintista "reformism" but was also against transferring the basis of CNT action from the syndicates to groups. See below, pp. 189 ff.
 3. "La C.N.T. en la entraña del proletariado del pueblo", op.cit., 4.

... It was really too optimistic of the social democrats, who had banished the most active fighters of the CNT to Africa, had imprisoned thousands upon thousands of CNT militants, banned their press, dissolved their unions, to expect to get votes on account of the fascist danger. But quite apart from differences between socialism and anarchism about points of principle and thus about tactics in the proletarian struggle for freedom, and apart from the practice of social democracy in Spain, they could point to a recent example that could not be overlooked in discussing fascist dangers: to the historical fact that in Germany, where the anarcho-syndicalist movement had small influence and thus no millions of votes to place on the scale, the participation of the whole working class in the elections, the thirteen million votes for the two proletarian political parties, had proved a broken reed against fascism....¹

In Catalonia, where the leaders of the Esquerra had to their own astonishment won a sweeping victory in April 1931, the Catalan Left politicians could not again hope for anarcho-syndicalist votes. Smarting from socialist attempts at incursion into the dockworkers' union, the CNT accused the Esquerra of trading its support of the UGT in Barcelona for socialist votes for the Catalan Autonomy Statute.

... Now, Catalan workers ... if you are still going to act without considering the consequences, you can vote for the insolvent opportunists of the "Esquerra"

But no! Logic and good sense will command your respect. You will not vote!²

The Iberian Anarchist Federation, held its Pleno Peninsular in the last days of October in Madrid and of course

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1. "De Spaansche Verkiezingen en de Crisis der Republiek" Grondslagen (Uitgave van het Nederlandsch Syndicalistisch Vakverbond), II, No.6 (1933), p.123. Grondslagen was published in Amsterdam.
 2. Jaime Aragó, "La política de 'Esquerra' y el Puerto de Barcelona", Solidaridad Obrera, No.822 (November 14, 1933), 2.

the plenum lent its support to electoral abstention.¹ Indeed, the militancy of the FAI attitude at this pleno presaged the coming December revolt. "If the campaign undertaken," said the Peninsular Committee of the abstentionist policy, "gives practical results, the F.A.I. must throw itself into the struggle."² The anarchist groups voted that "the overflow of all our effectives into Social Revolution must be the reply to any possible reactionary outbreak."³

1. Twenty-one delegates attended this plenum, representing 569 groups and 4,839 individuals. If to these figures are added the written adhesions of Levante and Asturias, the result is 632 groups and 5,334 individuals. Moreover, Norte and the Canaries were not represented at the Conference. Memoria del Pleno Peninsular ... de la F.A.I. de octubre 1933, pp. 3-4.

Another FAI source claimed in the same month that there were over 1,000 anarchist groups in Spain, and that each group averaged ten members. The writer contended that by adding to this number the families, sympathizers and anarchists not in groups, one could say that there were between twenty and forty thousand anarchists in Spain. José Bonet, "Problemas de nuestro tiempo", Tierra y Libertad, No. 136 (October 6, 1933), 4.

Mr. Brennan estimates that from 1934 to 1936 the membership of the FAI "was round about 10,000", op. cit., p. 184. Sr. Peirats, a member of the FAI, calculates that before July, 1936, there were about 30,000 members. But he adds that not even they themselves knew. In an interview with the writer, September 11, 1952, Toulouse.

2. Memoria del Pleno Peninsular ... de la F.A.I. ... de octubre 1933, p. 13.
3. Ibid, p. 12.

In Barcelona, the Local Federation added its voice to the call for social revolution:

...If as a result of our anti-electoral campaign and the present unpopularity of the left parties, reaction should attempt to enthrone itself in Spain, the revolutionary workers of Spain will have enough gallantry, courage, bravery and honor to plant themselves in the middle of the street and smash the reaction, using every kind of violence, making use of every weapon and every means....¹

In sum, the drumfire of the CNT and the FAI in October and November was directed toward a coming rising in the event of a rightist sweep at the polls. A CNT National Plenum of Regionals held on October 30, 1933 (also in Madrid), unanimously passed a recommendation which both implied an expectation that the Left would be defeated and indicated the steps which in consequence the CNT would take:

1. Considering an intensification of the anti-electoral campaign unavoidably necessary, and appealing to every means of oral and written propaganda;
2. Considering that on undertaking this abstentionist campaign, ...we are contracting a terrible responsibility to the Spanish proletariat;

We declare:

That if the fascist tendencies win, and for this or some other reason, the people become impassioned, the National Confederation of Labor has the duty to push on this popular desire in order truly to forge its goal of libertarian communism.

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1. "La Federación Local de Sindicatos Unicos Ante las Elecciones Próximas", Solidaridad Obrera, No.810 (October 31, 1933), 1-2.

It will be enough for one Regional to start the action for the entire Organization to take part in it; that is to say, as soon as one Regional rises, immediately, without further order, the rest must second it.¹

It is only fair to say that the treintista forces in the pre-election period also talked about going into the street to make the social revolution in the event the Right was successful. But while the "revolutionary syndicalists" did not urge the workers to vote, their abstentionist propaganda paled noticeably in comparison with the fervor of the official organization. Indeed, they objected to the CNT line.

...To us, the abstentionist campaign which the C.N.T. is undertaking has little sense now, and not necessarily because we are, even by conjecture, advocates of voting in these or any other elections²

The attitude which the C.N.T. is adopting is favorable to fascism. It gives weapons to reaction. Under the pretext of maintaining its traditional abstentionism, it is carrying out an effort of which the forces of reaction will take advantage....

Abstention? Yes. But neutrality, too.³

The treintista leaders preached abstentionism and neutrality, but they found it difficult to reconcile both with the fight against fascism. Their anxiety about the imminence of a fascist movement produced, rather, unmistakable whispers of reformist sentiment. Ricardo Fornells even used the naughty word when, in speaking of the Federación Sindicalista

1. Toryho, "Bosquejo del período....", p.102.

2. "¿Frente a Todos?", Sindicalismo, No.38 (November 3, 1933), 1.

3. "La Perspectiva Política y Social", ibid., No.36 (October 20, 1933), 1.

Libertaria, he asked, "Who are we? We are the party of the constructive Revolution."¹

Juan Peiró admitted that the republicans and socialists certainly deserved to lose the elections.

But the triumph of fascism, the return of the despicable king and the court of assassins and thieves who share emigration with him, would be something else. It would be an invasion of wolves who would throw themselves at our jugular veins with their teeth; it would be something which would swamp into oblivion the famous massacre of Huguenots which History recalls to us as "Saint Bartholemew's Night."²

Juan López praised the Socialist Party as "placing itself on a level of radicalism worthy of all respect".

... We, loyal adversaries of the socialists, [said López], ... cannot see in the doctrinal difference which divides us, any reason for not applauding this socialist radicalism.

And we see in the Socialist Party, bearing in mind its history and disciplinary mentality, what we do not see in the C.N.T. nowadays: a body which is evolving in sprightly fashion, ... which is moving coherently. And while it is in this socialism that we see the body which moves with such nimbleness, the heads of the majority of the present leaders of the C.N.T. look to us like rock.³

But it was Angel Pestaña, edging more and more toward outright reformism, whose position was most abrupt and

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1. "La Revolución constructiva", Sindicalismo, No. 39 (November 16, 1933), 1.
 2. "En pie contra el fascismo", ibid., No. 39 (November 10, 1933), 1.
 3. "Una trayectoria revolucionaria", ibid., No. 41 (November 24, 1933), 1.

startling. To Rafael Vidiella, who had left the CNT for the socialists, Pestana declared:

I do not know if the entire socialist slate of candidates for Madrid will win, as you affirm. For my part, I must tell you that I would be glad to see it, and that I will be happy if the candidates of the left win¹

What, then, was treintista policy in face of the fascist threat? It was to urge the Alianza Obrera:

... The C.N.T. [said López] should get out of its head the notion of making the revolution without counting on the socialists, the communists and us. And let the U.G.T. and the socialist party do the same thing. With isolated forces, there is no revolution. And if, besides being isolated, they even fight each other, much less.²

But the revolution did come (and go), and without the socialists, without the communists and without the Sindicatos de Oposición.

C. The Rising of December

The victory of the Right in the November elections was crushing. It was in no small part due to the success of the CNT abstentionist drive, "a campaign ... without parallel in the history of the labor movement."³ Solidaridad Obrera claimed that fifty per cent of the electorate had not voted and that half of those who had were women.⁴ Angel Pestana took an almost perverse pleasure in calculating that most of those who did not vote were completely uninfluenced by anarchist propaganda and that eighty per cent of the adult

1. "Ni frases ni tópicos: Realidades", Sindicalismo, No. 38 (November 3, 1933), 4.

2. "Una trayectoria revolucionaria", loc. cit.

3. Lehning, "De Spaansche Verkiezingen en de Crisis der Republiek", p. 121.

4. "Lo que dice y lo que calle la prensa", No. 830 (November 29, 1933), 2.

citizenry of Spain conformed to the electoral system.¹

The magnitude of the triumph of Lerroux and Gil Robles became clear at the start of December. On the third, the Government put the Ley de Orden Público (the less stringent successor to the Law of Defense) into operation for the first time and declared a state of emergency. The Government feared, and with good reason, a working-class revolt in protest at the victory of the Right.

At the October Plenum of Regionals in Madrid, several delegations, especially Aragon, had pressed hard for going to the revolution. "Most Regionals", said one person who attended the meeting, "were more or less against it but not openly: it is hard to be against someone who wants to make a revolution in Spain!"² But if the Aragon Regional rises, said the other delegations, we will do what we can.

Even earlier in October, at the pleno of the FAI, the Aragonese led the pressure for revolution. If fifty per cent of the voters abstain, they said, then the time is come to provoke the deed.³ In Aragon, it is in the air: "We cannot abandon our principles."⁴ When Catalonia proposed the "immediate" celebration of an Anarchist Congress, Aragon agreed and suggested that it should be held "the day after the Revolution!"⁵

1. "¿Qué hacer ahora?", Sindicalismo, No.42 (December 1, 1933),⁴

2. A.M. Lehning, in an interview with the writer, September 21, 1952, Amsterdam.

3. Memoria del Pleno Peninsular...de la F.A.I....de Octubre 1933
6-Sept., p.12.

4. Ibid., p.13.

5. Ibid., p.24.

The contrast between the enthusiasm of Aragon for provoking a revolution and the reluctance of the majority of the other regional organizations is illuminating. It illustrates in the first place the strong distaste of the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain for trespassing on the right of a region to autonomous action. The other regions did not--indeed on anarcho-syndicalist principles could not--forbid Aragon from rising. But they themselves were too weary from previous revolts to lend more than token solidarity in another attempt. Yet they pledged themselves to undertake a campaign of electoral abstention under conditions which made such a rising nearly inevitable. This remarkable action points to a dilemma which has tragically plagued the Spanish anarchists: in clinging steadfastly to their principles they have been driven into positions for which in practice they have been woefully unprepared. In December 1933 Aragon was able, at least better than were the other Regionals, to sustain its principles with some fighting forces. It was on honor alone that the others were obliged to rely.

Immediately before the rising a manifesto signed by the Comité Nacional Revolucionario sounded the unmistakable call:

People: the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. call you to armed insurrection. The hour of the revolution has sounded and the moment so much desired by the people for ending at once all the sufferings, privations and secular oppressions has now arrived. We are headed for the realization of Libertarian Communism. Every revolutionary worker must join the armed revolution. Women, in their homes. Workers, at their work. You must respond as one man to the call of the Confederation and the F.A.I.

We are devoting the first thrust to the destruction of organized Power, of the State, putting arms, which are the guarantee of liberation, into the hands of the people. Once this Power is destroyed, men will be on the same level of rights and stations. You must respect no authority. Those of you who are serving in the Army must convert yourselves into defenders of the revolution and place your arms at the service of liberty and the people.

Private property is abolished and all wealth will be handled collectively. The factories, workshops and all the means of production will be taken by the organized proletariat and placed under the control and administration of Factory and Work Committees, which will try to maintain production in its present proportions and characteristics. In the countryside, the lands and everything which constitutes the wealth of the people must be put at the disposition of the free Municipality. Workers who have been living in filthy dwellings should freely occupy the homes of the rich classes and buildings which meet good living standards. Stores and shops must pass to the control of the Ward Committees, which will take charge of the distribution of products and will guarantee the supplying of the population. Banks will be under the guard of the Revolutionary Committee, which will see that the wealth is put at the disposal of the producers. The use of money is suppressed, as is the carrying on of commerce, and the revolutionaries are obliged to persecute and use sanctions against any disobedience of this revolutionary agreement. The National Confederation of Labor and the F.A.I. will be represented by the colors red and black, under which the buildings which are returned to the people will be protected. Every other standard must be attacked as counter-revolutionary.

The Cuadros de Defensa are responsible for the armed defense of the revolution. You must all join it. You must be prepared to offer your lives in defense of the revolution, which also offers to you all the two most stable means of life: economic independence and liberty.

Workers of Spain: Let no one draw back before the decision to emancipate the working class!!! All those who do not cooperate in the armed insurrection are traitors!!! We must be energetic and not retreat one inch from the battle!!! Militants of the C.N.T. and of the F.A.I.: On your decision and your prompt action depends the triumph of the revolution!!! Soldiers: Your fathers and brothers are going to take over the tools of work; put your arms at the service of the revolution, which is your cause, too!!! Long live the C.N.T.! Long live the Iberian Anarchist Federation! Long live Libertarian Communism! Long live the revolution!.¹

The insurrection broke out on December 8, the opening day of the Cortes. García Oliver, still aching from the January defeat, thought this new attempt preposterous. "For the first time in their long friendship, Durruti disagreed with García Oliver and stuck to the revolutionary thesis."²

Durruti and other well known anarchists went to Zaragoza to coordinate the movement there, for it was almost entirely an Aragonese and Riojan affair.

In Barcelona a transport strike had been on for nearly three weeks. When the caretaker Government of Diego Martínez Barrio declared the state of emergency, the CNT in Catalonia suffered further from arrests, press censorship and the closing of syndicates. The Government took similar steps in Madrid. But even without them, Catalonia, Levante and Andalusia, which had borne the burden of the January revolt, were too weary to be a serious danger. Some strikes there

1. "Un manifiesto que han lanzado la C.N.T. y la F.A.I.", CNT, No.319 (December 9, 1933), 3.

2. Gilabert, Durruti..., op.cit., p.24.

were outside Aragon, but no risings. The Opposition Syndicates of Valencia, which had supported the general strike of May, recalled its failure and the confusion of tongues in the January insurrection. Their members refused to obey the strike orders of the National Committee and continued to work.¹

"Only Aragon", Isaac Puente, a member of the Revolutionary Committee there, said later, "has the peace of mind of one who has done his duty."² In Zaragoza nearly one hundred arrests were made on the night of the eighth. Durruti, Puente and Cipriano Mera, another active figure on the Revolutionary Committee, were all taken. Arrests commenced after some chance explosions in the city in the afternoon. The fight spread through the town during the night and the next day. Barricades were raised by workers, a convent was burned and the rapido from Barcelona entered the station wrapped in flames from incendiary bombs.

In Alcalá de Gurrea, Alcampel, Albaleta de Cinca, Villanueva de Sigüenza and Barbastro, all in the province of Huesca, libertarian communism was proclaimed, as it was in certain pueblos of Teruel. In Valderrobles, for example, money was abolished and the archives of the Ayuntamiento, courts and real estate registry were burned.

1. "Manifiesto de los Sindicatos de Oposición a la C.N.T.", Vertical (the Catalan-Spanish weekly of the Local Federation of Syndicates of Sabadell), No.59 (December 15, 1933), 2.

2. "La represión en Zaragoza", Suplemento de Tierra y Libertad (Barcelona), III, No.18 (January-February-March, 1934), 2. This issue of the Supplement describes the progress of the December rising in various localities.

In Rioja, where practically all the vineyard workers had abstained from voting in November, there was much street fighting between workers and the Civil Guard. Here, as elsewhere, the arrival of the army with machine-guns, tanks and even planes quelled the rebellion in a few days. Aside from the war-weariness of Catalonia, Andalusia and Levante, José Peirats points to the lack of arms by the CNT and the failure of the socialists to respond as other reasons for the second revolutionary fiasco in less than a year.¹

Literally thousands of arrests were made following the insurrection. Whole trainloads of CNT members were hauled off to the garrison of Chincillaⁿ. The CNT was again outlawed, its newspapers banned, its committees brought to trial.

The withering winds of treintista criticism began to blow. The substance of the syndicalist attacks was plain: the FAI had wrenched the CNT away from contact with the confederal masses. One Catalan syndicalist newspaper commented that the Regionals met and said they brought a mandate for the revolution. It came; they did not support it; why not?

...Simply because the delegates of the Comarcals and Locals who attend the Regional Plenums to discuss and take agreements on the proposition made by the Regional Committee, represent no one, absolutely no one....This is the truth. But that does not keep them from proclaiming themselves

1. Peirats, op.cit., p.68.

representatives of powerful forces in their locality or comarca and that, furthermore, they have a mandate from them to vote for the necessity of going to the social revolution immediately and implanting libertarian communism.¹

The revolt only confirms "the growth of the F.A.I. and the decadence of the C.N.T.", said Juan Lopez. It proves moreover that "every exclusive action of one part of the proletariat, in these times, is doomed to failure."²

"This revolutionary movement is profoundly counter-revolutionary", declared Sindicalismo.³ The CNT had nothing to do with it, said Peiro, "nor did syndicalism or anarcho-syndicalism, and if you really push me, anarchism either". It was the work of the FAI again, divorced from the masses of the CNT.⁴ "The hour of treintismo", concluded another writer, "has sounded!"⁵

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1. "Después del último movimiento", Vía Libre (Villanueva y Geltru), No.10 (December 29, 1933), 1.
 2. "Enseñanzas del último movimiento", Sindicalismo, No.45 (December 19, 1933), 2.
 3. No.44 (December 15, 1933), 1.
 4. "La severa lección de los hechos", ibid., No.46 (December 29, 1933), 1.
 5. José Duque, "Ha sonado la Hora del 'Treintismo': Después de la tragedia", ibid. .

D. The Sindicatos de Oposición

During 1933 the treintista forces within the CNT developed their own independent organization, and the confederal breach was deepened. Even before the expulsion of the Sabadell syndicates in April, the Federación Sindicalista Libertaria attempted to hold its first large-scale meeting.¹ That the effort was not a success is attested by the following headline from Sindicalismo:

Los grupos de la F.A.I. substituyen a las milicias Fascistas

Our meeting on Sunday is suspended due to the disturbing action of the F.A.I.- The Libertarian Syndicalist Federation, serenely, avoided a day of mourning in Barcelona; but, from now on, it declares that it asserts its right to think and act against white fascism and against red-black fascism, both equally contemptible. - We shall, against the "faiero" despotism, be in the noble and worthy position of men who know how to offer their lives to Liberty. - To the shout of "Long live the F.A.I.", we will oppose another. "Long live revolutionary syndicalism! Down with groupism! Against fascism, mass action!"²

In Barcelona the syndicalists circulated a manifesto calling for a regeneration of the syndicates by setting up a separate organization.³ The Aragon Regional cried, "Betrayal!" and bitterly attacked the treintistas for establishing rival syndicates:

1. The Federación Sindicalista Libertaria was organized along the same Federalist lines as the CNT, with local, comarcal, regional and national committees. Pestana became secretary-general of the organization. For the Declaration of Principles of the FSL, see "Ateneo Sindicalista Libertario", El Combate Sindicalista, No.14 (May 27, 1933), 3.
2. No.9 (April 14, 1933), 1.
3. "Un documento que será histórico: El manifiesto de un grupo de compañeros que ha de ser la base de la reconstrucción del movimiento sindical, minado actualmente por el sectarismo de la F.A.I.", Sindicalismo, No.16 (June 2, 1933), 4.

...All the defects, all the vices, all the errors, all the immortalities, all the transgressions of doctrine which according to them have been imposed by the groups of the F.A.I. within the Syndicates... we do not consider reason enough to defend and propagate division....We will never encourage splitting, because it is equivalent to strengthening the bulwark of capitalism as well as delaying the moment of our emancipation and because these divisions apart from the moral havoc which they always produce, give rise to fratricidal fights among the workers.¹

It was too late. On June 4, 1933, the first Pleno Regional de los Sindicatos de Oposición de Cataluña was convened. Fifty-three delegations, representing over 26,000 workers in Catalonia, met and agreed not only to maintain an independent organization but to broaden its activity. Although most of the opposition syndicates had already stopped paying the confederal seals, the plenum agreed that all opposition syndicates should follow suit. The meeting also decided to call a national conference of all Sindicatos de Oposición and to bring out an Opposition daily.²

Perhaps the most interesting result of this plenum was a note sent to the CNT Regional Committee in Catalonia, a note termed "the last recourse" to save the unity of the CNT. This "last recourse" would be a joint congress which would oust all the faístas from the top posts which they were dominating and condemn the FAI on principle. The note read

1. "La Confederación Regional del Trabajo de Aragón, Rioja y Navarra se dirige al pueblo y a los trabajadores de Cataluña, afirmando que "los treintistas" traicionan los principios fundamentales de la Confederación Nacional del Trabajo", Solidaridad Obrera, No.688 (June 7, 1933), 6.
2. "Los sindicatos de la oposición adoptan una resolución firme: ¡Ni un paso atrás frente al faísmo!", Sindicalismo, No.17 (June 9, 1933), 1.

more like an ultimatum than a peace overture:

The commission in charge of reporting on the need to begin negotiations with the representative organs of the C.N.T., considering that the so-called Opposition Syndicates of Catalonia are already, from today on, converted into a movement of their own, with their own defined organization, absolutely independent of the Committees of the C.N.T.; considering that the Opposition movement is justified by a complete disfiguration of syndicalism and its federalist spirit, thanks to the influence of the F.A.I.; considering that the activity of the C.N.T. under the influence which is at present predominant, far from being converted into a mass movement which checks the advance of the repressive methods of the capitalist system, is producing the impotence of the working class--of advantage only to reaction and capitalism--Considering, finally, that what inspired the efforts of the Opposition is the desire of unifying the action of the forces of labor in order to free them from sectarianism and the incapacity of the present leaders of the C.N.T., the Opposition Syndicates declare:

First. That the Opposition movement cannot be considered as either a provisional or opportunist action, but it constitutes the first stage of the reconstruction of the labor movement on its proper bases of class unity, anti-capitalist and anti-statist.

Second. That the Opposition Syndicates, notwithstanding and affirming that their movement cannot be considered provisional, in view of the effective force they control and the invulnerability of their moral base, that is, revolutionary syndicalism, are prepared to accept negotiations with the rest of the Syndicates of the C.N.T. under the following conditions:

a) That a Regional Conference of all the Syndicates of Catalonia adhering to the Opposition and to the Catalan Regional be called by a Commission composed of an equal number of representatives from each organization.

b) That before this Conference all individual and collective expulsions made in the Catalan region by Committees and Syndicates must be considered void.

c) In this Conference, the resignations of the Regional Committee of Catalonia, Committee for Prisoners of Catalonia and "Solidaridad Obrera" (Editorial Staff) must be made effective, without the right to be re-elected at this meeting.

d) That the Conference name a Commission of five members, charged with preparing a report in which the revolutionary and administrative activity of the regional Committees from the start of the Republic is reviewed, in order to demonstrate the responsibilities of those who have gone against the fundamental principles of the organization and have sought to supplant the role of the trade unions with another kind of organization of their own....

Moreover, this Commission must be composed of two comrades of the Syndicates of the opposition, two from the rest of the Syndicates and one member of the A.I.T., who must be named from among the following comrades: R.Rocker, A.Souchy, D.Yong, Schapiro, Jennsen or P.Besnard.

e) The Conference will prepare the agenda for the regional Congress to be held three months after the date of this Conference, and it will, provisionally, make the following declarations:

First. The workers' Syndicates cannot admit either terrorism or the action of groups as a fighting tactic.

Second. The Syndicate is not only opposed to robberies but it condemns them, deeming them an immorality equal to that of the capitalist regime, which is legalized and violent robbery.

Third. To consider that agreements taken in Congresses cannot be altered or distorted by Plenums.

Fourth. That votes in assemblies, Plenums and Congresses, must be taken by means of a rigorous control of the members who have the confederal stamp.

Fifth. To consider the necessity of setting up the national Federations of industry, boycotted up to the present time, to be beyond dispute in the Syndicates.

Third. The members of this committee [of the Opposition Plenum], considering that the present leaders of the C.N.T., putting the spirit of party above that of class and secluding themselves in their sectarianism, will perhaps not accept the points put forth by us, and considering at once that the conditions noted here are the minimum of what is necessary, given the profundity of the crisis, we understand that all the same whether they are accepted or not, the opposition syndicates must retain the principles contained in the present recommendation as a pattern for their own activity.¹

"Perhaps" said the treintistas, the present leaders of the CNT will not accept our suggestions! To the standard epithet of "the thirty Judases" were added scathing references to "Father Pestana" and his "sons of Loyola"². Writing from jail, Manuel Rivas brushed off the proposals as simply one more treintista "maneuver condemned to failure".³ The Pleno de Regionales of June declared that the National Confederation of Labor

...has no reason to begin conversations or negotiations with those who, under shelter of every sort of repression, raise themselves up as mentors of so-called "masses" of laboring people....⁴

There were some efforts, not successful, from within the CNT to smooth over the troubles and achieve a settlement. Manuel Buenacasa, for example, blamed the volatile atmosphere of Barcelona and Catalonia as one of the principal causes

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1. "Por la reorganización confederal", Sindicalismo, No.18 (June 16, 1933), 1.
 2. El Luchador, No.116 (June 23, 1933), 4.
 3. "Habilidad 'treintista'", Solidaridad Obrera, No.692 (June 11, 1933), 2.
 4. "Confederación Nacional del Trabajo: A la Organización Confederal y a todos los trabajadores", CNT, No.187 (July 8, 1933), 1.

of the conflict. He accordingly advised that for a time at least the CNT National Committee and the FAI Peninsular Committee should leave Catalonia, that the Regional confederal Committee should move to the province of Gerona and the Regional FAI Committee go to some town in Tarragona.¹

A group of one hundred Asturians, led by Eleuterio Quintanilla², also sought to mediate in the dispute. They said quite frankly that doctrinally, they agreed with the treintistas and that they were "firmly persuaded that the hour of victory would come to the Opposition". But they could not countenance the growth of another syndical movement outside the CNT.³

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1. La C.N.T., Los "Treinta" y La F.A.I., op.cit., pp.170-71.
 2. In 1952 the writer visited Quintanilla in Bordeaux, where, in poverty and exile, he maintains a striking dignity. When I informed him that I was undertaking this study, he was so moved that he gave me an abrazo and kissed me on both cheeks. The moderates, or "collaborationist" wing of the CNT in exile today still consider Quintanilla, along with Peiró, their intellectual godfathers.
 3. "Los militantes de la oposición en Asturias: Un documento de gran interés", Sindicalismo, No.29 (September 1, 1933), 4.

The Asturian move coincided with the second Pleno Regional of the Opposition Syndicates,¹ held on August 13 in Mataró, the stronghold of Juan Peiró. Because

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1. "As a basis for establishing the number of those represented at the Regional Plenum of the opposition syndicates, the paying membership was taken, this figure being over 26,000. But counting members in general, the workers organized and controlled by the opposition block in Catalonia are over 35,000. If one adds to this the 15,000 of the syndicates of Valencia, those of Huelva, Cartagena and other pueblos of Spain which have still not established direct relations with the opposition, because a National Committee to link these forces does not yet function, we can be sure that the federated workers who have declared against the immoralities and chaos of the leaders of the C.N.T. come to over 60,000.

"The figure is insignificant if one considers the volume of the Spanish proletariat. But it is very important if one compares it with the present effectives controlled by the Committees of the C.N.T. in frank disintegration."

"El peso de la oposicion", Sindicalismo, No.30 (September 8, 1933), 4.

By way of comparison: in June 1933, when Jose Corbella was elected new secretary of the Regional Committee of the CNT and Liberto Callejas new editor of "Sol", the number of members who took part in this referendum was 127,000, spread among 108 syndicates. "Confederación Regional del Trabajo de Cataluña", Solidaridad Obrera, No.403 (June 28, 1933), 6.

of the failure of the Catalan Regional Committee to reply to their propositions, the Opposition Syndicates considered themselves at complete liberty to intensify their own movement. They decided that henceforth the Comité de Relaciones de los Sindicatos de la Oposición would be called the Comité Regional de Oposición Confederal, and that the structure of the Opposition block would be analogous to that of the CNT. The plenum maintained the willingness of the Opposition to attend a national congress of the CNT, but warned that they would walk out at the slightest insult.¹

All during the summer and autumn of 1933 while the official CNT organization busied itself with the struggle against capitalists, socialists and the State, the Opposition movement spent its energy in attacks on the FAI and deification of the syndicates as a cure-all. The worst terms of abuse which the two sides could hurl at each other seemed to be, respectively, "anarchist" and "syndicalist". But with the formidable increase in power of the Spanish Right, culminating in the November elections, the treintistas channeled their activities in a new direction: the campaign for the Alianza Obrera.

1. "Los Sindicatos de la oposicion se estructuran seriamente", Sindicalismo, No.27 (August 18, 1933), 1. The recommendations accepted by the Opposition Syndicates were prepared by Peiró, Juan López and a third syndicalist from Sabadell.

CHAPTER IX

THE ALIANZA OBRERA

A. The Treintistas

We have traced the most significant developments within the CNT during 1933 with but one exception. Over a year before the great rising of October 1934 in Asturias, the Alianza Obrera, or Workers' Alliance against fascism, became an issue of debate within the anarcho-sindicalist movement in Spain.¹ If not yet the central focus of controversy which it proved to be in 1934, the frente unico was nonetheless another point of division in the CNT. The Sindicatos de Oposición were for it and the official organization was not.

When Lerroux succeeded Azaña in September 1933, Juan López warned that fascism was advancing and that no single party or organization could contain it.² Angel Pestaña spelled out the treintista attitude:

... In order to avoid fascism in Spain it is necessary to establish an alliance, an "entente", a compromise, a coalition or whatever you may like to call it, between the C.N.T., the U.G.T., the

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1. The united front was advocated as early as March 1933 by the Bloque Obrero y Campesino. See "Desenmascarando a los saboteadores del Frente Unico", La Batalla, No. 143 (May 5, 1933), 3.
 2. "La segunda etapa de la República: Se abre paso al fascismo", Sindicalismo, No. 32 (September 22, 1933), 4.

Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Workers' and Peasants' Block, the Iberian Anarchist Federation and the Libertarian Syndicalist Federation--Impossible!!! a thousand voices clamor at once. And in addition to the astonishment my affirmation causes them, they add that I am little better than crazy: that I don't know what I am saying or that I have lost my head. Maybe so. But if I have lost my head in talking about union among all the organizations mentioned on the basis of the concrete and exact end which I assign to them [opposition to fascism], they and I, all of us together, will lose it on the day fascism comes unless we reach an agreement beforehand to prevent it.¹

Juan Peiró warned that the Alianza Obrera was in no way to be considered an electoral pact.² He outlined the treintista conception of the goals of the united front more clearly a few months later. The objectives were two, said Peiró: "opposition to fascism by the destruction of capitalist society ... and establishment of the Federalist Social Republic" He emphasized that the pact of Workers' Alliance implied direct action only. In a social republic organized on federal lines, the various geographical regions and towns would be linked by economic not political ties. Each pueblo would have complete freedom to organize its own internal life independent of that of other pueblos. The State would be merely the center of the federation of the

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1. "Frente al Fascismo", Sindicalismo, No. 35 (October 13, 1933), 1.
 2. "El Frente Obrero Antifascista", ibid., No. 44 (December 15, 1933), 4.

pueblos represented by their municipalities and would be charged with general matters. Such a Federalist Social Republic conforms to the ideology of every one of the sectors of the Alliance, concluded Peiró.¹

One week before the November elections, the Regional Plenum of the Catalan Opposition Syndicates, in Mataró, agreed that if the Right won the elections, and attempted a coup, they should declare a general strike. If the Right lost the elections, the opposition movement, to guard against a coup, should invite all syndical organizations to form an antifascist front.²

On December 9, the day after the rising in Aragon, the representatives of the following organizations announced the formation of the Alianza Obrera in Catalonia: UGT (J. Vila Cuenca); Opposition Syndicates (Angel Pestana); Federación Socialista de Barcelona (affiliated to the Socialist Party), Rafael Vidiella; Bloque Obrero y Campesino (Joaquín Maurín); Federación Sindicalista Libertaria (Juan López); Unió Socialista de Catalunya (M. Martínez Cuenca); Izquierda Comunista (Andrés Nin); Unió de Rabassaires de Catalunya

1. "A la unidad revolucionaria sin renuncios", Sindicalismo, No. 57 (March 14, 1934), 1.

2. "Els Sindicats D'Oposició de la C.N.T. S'Aixecarien Contra la Reacció, Vertical, No. 55 (November 17, 1933), 1.

(José Calvet); Federación de Sindicatos expulsados de la C.N.T. (under the control of the BOC), Francisco Aguilar.¹

B. The Asturians

Ultimately, however, the drive of the Asturian Regional of the CNT for an alliance with the UGT was of more significance in shaping the frente unico than the growth of the Alianza Obrera in Catalonia. There are several reasons for the divergence of Asturias from the mainstream of the CNT on the united front question. In the first place, the CNT in Asturias was in the minority. It centered in La Felguera and Gijón and had at best 25,000 of the 70,000 organized workers of the region. Almost all the others, with the exception of several thousand communists (orthodox), were members of the UGT, of which the principal stronghold was Oviedo. Socialist influence on the Asturian anarcho-syndicalists was therefore unavoidable.

Aside from its minority position, the Asturian Regional was the traditional proponent of workers' unity in Spain. In 1919 the Asturians, led by Quintanilla, proposed that the

1. "Se constituye la Alianza Obrera, frente de hierro de los trabajadores contra la Reacción", Sindicalismo, No. 44 (December 15, 1933), 1.

Mr. Brennan (op. cit., p. 274) states that the Rabassaires did not join the Workers' Alliance until "later". In view of the December pact, this contention would not seem to be correct.

Congress of the Comedia should declare:

1. That it views with sympathy the propositions for unifying the Spanish laboring forces and desires to see them crystallized into tangible realities soon.

2. That it would view with satisfaction the celebration of an extraordinary national congress of the organizations which belong to the U.G. of T. and the C.N. of T. called by committees of both national organizations with the object of proposing, discussing and approving the conditions of unification.

3. That the decisions of this national Congress should have an executive and irrevocable character for all the member bodies, the C.N. of T. promising from now on to accept them in their entirety and to observe them faithfully so long as they are not modified by the successive periodical Congresses of the future national federative organization.¹

A vocal group of Asturians had already given their approval, if not their organizational allegiance, to ^{2.} treintista syndicalist doctrine. Moreover, the Asturians were able to throw themselves into the campaign for the Workers' Alliance with energy. They had not exhausted their resources in the risings of 1932 and 1933. Nor did they find the socialists stand-offish. After the November elections, Largo Caballero veered left and talked in terms of violent

1. The entire text of this proposal may be found in Memoria del Congreso ... de 1919, pp. 117-18. The Asturian proposition was defeated by a vote of 323,955 to 169,125, with 10,192 abstentions. Ibid., p. 172.

2. See above, p. 180.

revolutions to meet the Government of reaction. Indeed, the UGT-socialist leader was the most important force in Spain in shaping the united front. In Asturias the outcome of these developments in the two working-class camps was the following pact, signed on March 28, 1934, by the Regional Committees of the CNT and UGT:

The organizations which sign, the U.G.T. and the C.N.T., agree between themselves in recognizing that against the economic and political sway of the bourgeois regime in Spain, the joint action of all the labor sectors with the exclusive objective of advancing and achieving the social revolution is imperative. To that end, each organization of those which subscribe promises to keep the promise set forth in this Pact, under the following conditions:

1. The organizations signatories of this Pact will work in common accord to attain the triumph of the social revolution in Spain, establishing a regime of economic, political and social equality, based on socialist federalist principles.

2. For the attainment of this goal, an Executive Committee will be set up in Oviedo to represent all the member organizations of this Pact, which Committee will act in agreement with a national committee of the same character for the purpose of general action throughout Spain.

3. ...

4. In each locality throughout Asturias, a Committee will be set up composed of delegations from each of the organizations which sign this Pact and those others which, giving their adherence, may be admitted by the Executive Committee.

5. After the date on which this Pact is signed, all propaganda campaigns which might obstruct or embitter relations among the allied parties will cease, without this meaning a departure from the peaceful and reasonable labor of the different sectors in the Revolutionary Alliance in advocating their own doctrines for which purpose they will keep their collective independence.

6. The Executive Committee will draw up a plan of action which, by means of the revolutionary effort of the proletariat, will assure the triumph and constitution of the revolution in its different aspects, according to the norms of the agreement previously established.

7. Decisions of the Executive Committee will form additional clauses to the present Pact and will be mandatory for all the organizations represented. These agreements will be binding during the period when the revolution is being prepared as well as in victory. It is understood that the resolutions of the Executive Committee referred to will be in conformity with the spirit of this Pact.

8. The obligations contracted by the organizations which subscribe will end at the moment when the regime mentioned in the first paragraph has been implanted, with its own organs, voluntarily elected by the working class

9. Considering that this Pact constitutes an agreement of organizations of the working class for coordinating their action against the bourgeois regime and for abolishing it, those organizations which may have had organic relationship with bourgeois parties will automatically break them off in order to devote themselves exclusively to the attainment of the ends which the present Pact specifies.

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10. ...

C. Orobón Fernández

José María Martínez, who supported the 1919 Asturian proposal for unity, was, fifteen years later, the staunchest voice in Asturias in support of the Alliance. In Andalusia, Vicente Ballester took the lead in urging a united front.

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1. Ignotus [Manuel Villar], El Anarquismo en la Insurrección de Asturias: La C.N.T. y la F.A.I. en octubre de 1934 (Valencia: Ediciones "Tierra y Libertad", 1935), pp. 31-33.

In the Centro the chief advocate of a UGT-CNT alliance was Valeriano Orobón Fernández. Orobón was a gifted young intellectual born in Valladolid who was a member of the AIT Secretariat. His conception of the strategic role of the anarcho-syndicalist movement was, for an outstanding CNT leader at this time, unusual and of no little significance.

Not only did the attitude of Orobón Fernández represent a minority stream of pro-Alianza Obrera sentiment within the official CNT. It typified a third position with respect to the conflict between the treintistas and the FAI. It was a point of view supported both by non-Spanish members of the International Secretariat of the AIT, such as Arthur M. Lehning and Alexander Schapiro, and by the Spanish members, Eusebio C. Carbó and Orobón himself. "We are left of the FAI", Schapiro had said, speaking for the AIT Secretariat. This approach meant opposition to the FAI faith in putsches as the tactic for making the revolution. But it also stood against the treintista propensity for making the CNT a kind of French CGT, which would work for improvement of workers' conditions without, at bottom, threatening the very foundations of the existing political and social system.¹ Anarchists, this third and more independent view held, would have to supply the ideological sustenance of the CNT, but anarchism would always

1. A. M. Lehning, in an interview with the writer, March 15, 1953, Amsterdam.

have to work within the syndicates and not center its activity in small groups. This was a position which can, in the most accurate sense of the phrase, be termed "anarche-syndicalist".

In February Orobón published an article in the Madrid newspaper, La Tierra, which established him as the most significant anarcho-syndicalist advocate of the Alianza Obrera outside Asturias. "Psychologically," said Orobón, "the revolutionary alliance is already a fact." He chastized those members of the CNT who fought such co-operation. The complete failure of political democracy, the displacement of the socialists and the march of the Spanish bourgeoisie toward fascism had radically changed the situation in the last two months. "To set yourself against the revolutionary workers' alliance, whether in good faith or bad, is to set yourself against the revolution."

Orobón bid the communists to cease their sectarianism and the socialists to stop their insidious pamphlet campaign accusing the CNT of undercover relations with the reactionaries. The socialists, he added, must realize that they cannot alternate between revolution and bourgeois legality. If Largo Caballero wants us to believe the sincerity of his revolutionary pyrotechnics, which we are quite prepared to do, he should discipline those socialist leaders who are against workers' unity and the revolution.

Only neutral ground, argued Orobón, can serve as a basis for an alliance. The socialists and communists put too much faith in the political instrument for making the revolution and not enough in the syndicates, which are the direct representatives of the workers and the natural pillars of the new order. He concluded by suggesting five general principles on which to establish the revolutionary alliance:

First. Agreement on an unmistakably revolutionary plan which, absolutely excluding all policy of collaboration with the bourgeois regime, aims at wiping it out with a speed limited only by strategic considerations.

Second. Acceptance of revolutionary workers' democracy, that is to say, of the majority will of the proletariat as common denominator and decisive element in the new order of things.

Third. Immediate socialization of the factors of production, transport, communications, housing and finance; return of the unemployed to the productive process, orientation of the economy toward increasing output and raising the standard of living of the working people as much as possible, establishing a rigorously equitable system of distribution

Fourth. The municipal and industrial organizations, organized into national federations, will see that the economy functions in a unified fashion.

Fifth. All executive organs necessary for non-economic activities will be subject to popular control by election and possible recall by the people.

These bases ... constitute a point of agreement on fundamentals for all the tendencies.¹

1. Quoted in Peirats, op. cit., pp. 70-78.

This platform, added Orobón, does not guarantee libertarian communism the day after the revolution.

But what it does guarantee is a regime of proletarian democracy without exploitation or class privileges and with a great open door to the completely libertarian society.¹

Orobón may have expected that a program containing phrases such as "proletarian democracy" could be a viable basis for a Workers' Alliance between the UGT and CNT. But--even leaving aside official CNT truculence--Orobón's conditions were still far too heavily weighted toward revolutionary syndicalism to make UGT acceptance of them a likelihood.

D. The Attitude of the CNT

In the middle of February a National Plenum of Regionals in Barcelona heatedly discussed the Workers' Alliance and pronounced against it. Catalonia was particularly adamant on the matter, largely because there was little socialist influence there and secondly, because of the memory of past repression when the socialists were in the Government.

Remember, warned Juan Mamiel Molina, that in 1917 the politicians split the Spanish proletariat with the promise of a revolution. The anarchists suffered harsh repression while the socialists betrayed the movement. Remember

1. Quoted in Peirats, op. cit., p. 78.

socialist co-operation with Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. Remember how the conspiratorial pacts made by the CNT and the FAI to overthrow the monarchy only weakened the libertarian spirit of the Spanish people and increased the prestige of the political parties. Remember the bitter repression suffered by the CNT under socialists and left republicans. Confronted with such powerful reasons as these,

... We declare that there cannot exist the slightest contact or compromise between the anarchists and the leaders of the political parties. The goal which the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. pursue is diametrically opposed to that of all the political parties and therefore makes any sincere agreement impossible.¹

Even now, added other anarchists, the Unió Socialista de Catalunya is participating in the newly formed Esquerra Government of Companys. For at this time the Esquerra, or, more correctly, one of its component groups (the Estat Catalá), was following a policy of militant attack on the CNT. Largo Caballero made a special trip to Barcelona to order the USC to drop out of the Generalitat Government. Juan Comorera, the leader of this not very large group of Catalan socialist nationalists and Companys' Minister of Economy, refused. The USC was ousted from the recently constituted Catalan Alianza Obrera for collaborating with bourgeois parties. But rather than temper their obstinacy, the anarchists of the

1. Juanel, "Los anarquistas ante el llamado frente unico y la unidad revolucionaria", Tierra y Libertad, No. 146 (February 16, 1934), 1.

CNT claimed still another argument to bolster their disdain at the idea of working with socialists. For the collaborationist USC was a "socialist" party, was it not?

The CNT contempt for co-operation on a syndical level, that is with the UGT, was only a little less intense than its contempt for collaboration with a political "socialist" party. The February plenum therefore brought itself to call on the UGT to make known its revolutionary aspirations. But, cautioned the confederal conference, when we say 'revolution', we do not mean a simple change of powers like that of April 14, "but the total suppression of capitalism and the State."^{1.}

E. Strikes

Soon came the Government crisis of early March. The Right is advancing, said the CNT National Committee. Yet "the U.G.T. has replied to our cordial invitation with silence."^{2.} Lerroux fell. "And they are talking," thundered the Catalan Regional Federation in a near-frantic manifesto, "about the constitution of ministries of still more markedly

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1. Solidaridad (A Barcelona CNT daily, first published on February 13, 1934. Solidaridad Obrera was suspended at this time), No. 2 (February 14, 1934), 1.
 2. "El Problema del 'Frente Unico'", Solidaridad, No. 16 (March 2, 1934), 1.

rightist and monarchist tendencies"1.

Never have there been moments so grave,
So decisive as the ones in which we are living
This is not the time for words, but deeds

Our supreme watchword is:
AGAINST EVERY FASCIST ATTEMPT; AGAINST NO
MATTER WHAT KIND OF DICTATORSHIP; AGAINST
EVERY POLITICAL REVOLUTION, THE SOCIAL REVO-
LUTION OF THE IBERIAN WORKERS THE
REVOLUTIONARY WATCHWORD OF THE WORKERS MUST
BE: DESTRUCTION OF THE STATE DENYING IT THE
OBEDIENCE WHICH SUSTAINS IT. OCCUPATION OF
THE FACTORIES OF THE WORKSHOPS, OF ALL THE
PLACES OF LABOR. SOCIALIZATION OF THE LAND,
SEIZURE OF THE MUNICIPALITIES BY THE POPULAR
FORCES. PROCLAMATION OF THE FREE COMMUNE.

Laborers! All workers of Spain, wherever
you are, be militant, whether you call your-
selves communists, socialists, syndicalists
or anarchists! ...

For the Revolution, For Liberty, for
Justice, for Anarchy! ...2.

But there was no rising.

Lerroux succeeded Lerroux and the CEDA and the Lliga
Catalana received no posts in the new Government.

Yet the agitation continued. The state of emergency
had been in force for nearly three months. The CNT was
still illegal. In Barcelona the tram strike went into its
fifth week. In Madrid the building workers struck and were
followed on March 9 by CNT and UGT metal workers. On March

1. "Una Hora Decisiva", Solidaridad, No. 17 (March 3, 1934),
1-2.

2. Ibid.

13, in the most surprising strike action of early 1934, a twenty-four hour strike of sympathy with the Madrid workers occurred in Catalonia in response not to the CNT but to the call of the Comité Regional de Alianza Obrera.

In Barcelona the Alianza Obrera strike failed, but in some Catalan towns, Tarragona, Valls, Tortosa and Manresa, it was more or less general. That it should have had any success at all without CNT support was remarkable. While Joaquín Maurín may have been gleeful, Juan Peiró was not. He strongly criticized the strike, in tones very like those of the Barcelona Local Federation of Syndicates. The social situation in Madrid was not so grave as to require a show of solidarity by Catalan workers, complained Peiró. Moreover, at least thirty-six hours were necessary to organize a general strike in Catalonia. Nor was Mataró or indeed any labor organization in the rest of Catalonia consulted about the strike. We had to avoid expending energy uselessly. The Alianza Obrera was set up to make a social revolution, not to organize general strikes.¹ Peiró might have added that the Workers' Alliance was not strong enough to organize many such

1. "Dos Cosas Lamentables", Combate (Diario Sindicalista Revolucionario: Órgano de los Sindicatos de la Oposición en la C.N.T.), No. 4 (March 18, 1934), 8. This new opposition journal had a short life, about one month. The only reason it did not die of bankruptcy is because the authorities banned it first.

demonstrations even if it wanted to.

April opened with a general strike in Zaragoza which one student has called "the most general strike in the whole history of the labor movement."¹ It persisted for thirty-six days. Although both the CNT and the UGT participated in it, it was not an Alianza Obrera project. There was no frente unico in Aragon, where the CNT was far stronger than the UGT.

In Zaragoza a bomb exploded in front of the police station; the police arrested a number of workers and handled them very roughly. A subsequent two day strike of protest against this mistreatment was prolonged on the dismissal of some tram and bus conductors who refused to return to work. There were no newspapers; there was no transport, no industry. The Civil Governor declared the strike illegal. Soldiers were called in to patrol the streets. In May four hundred taxis waited in Barcelona for the arrival of several hundred children being evacuated from Zaragoza. Catalan anarcho-syndicalists had signed up to care for over 18,000 children of their striking brothers in Aragon. In view of their having led the December rising and suffered the consequent repression, the moral and physical stamina of the stubborn Aragonese workers in this strike was indeed a remarkable display.

1. A. M. Lehning, in an interview with the writer, September 21, 1952, Amsterdam.

F. The CNT Remains Aloof

At an important Pleno Nacional de Regionales on June 23, the Alianza Obrera was the pivotal question of debate. Asturias surveyed the syndical scene and found the CNT wanting: "Levante can do nothing; Norte is in a minority compared with the socialists." So are Asturias and the Centro. "Galicia controls a few small pueblos, with the U.G.T. dominating in Vigo and elsewhere." If the revolutionary spirit of Catalonia has not declined, its "moral influence on the workers" has. By refusing to make a pact with the socialists now, before the revolution, we will become "the unknown soldier" when the battle begins, subject to the whims of the victorious socialist chiefs. If the Government should try to destroy us now, "we are in no condition to oppose it alone, because we are exhausted." We must forget the socialist betrayals of the past and make an alliance with the UGT immediately and not wait until the hour of advantage has passed us by.

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1. National Committee of the CNT, Internal Report of the CNT Debates on the Workers' Alliance Question and on the Role of the CNT in the Rising of October 1934 (Zaragoza: December 1934), pp. 11-14. This document was drawn up by the National Committee following the October events. It was secretly prepared and intended to be distributed clandestinely among the trade-union committees and anarchist groups. Because of troubles with the printer the printing was delayed and with but two days left for the printing of the title-page, the police raided the press and confiscated nearly the entire edition of 10,000 copies. This is the reason the document carries no title; the English title is the writer's. In 1936 the entire document was published as a portion of a
- (Footnote continued on next page)